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## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES



# Deep-Sea Bubbles

OF THE CRUISE OF THE

ANNA LOMBARD

*by*

HENRY H. BOOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

THE last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the termination of the transition stage of a great revolution which took place in the shipping world; a natural sequence of Empire expansion.

The passing of the sailing-ship and the development of steamships was slow—as man measures time—but it was, nevertheless, very sure. It was a natural law applied to business evolution which caused the old ships to give place to the new, and one of the most picturesque periods of England's history has passed away for ever.

The wonders of the composite and clipper ships are now almost forgotten in the development of the luxurious liners and great cargo carriers of modern times, and with the old craft have vanished also the men who formed their crews.

In the eighteen-eighties and nineties a few of these men survived. They were sometimes to be met with in shipping ports; their herding-places were the slums and so-called tenderloin districts of important places; these men who helped in their small way to build up England's commercial greatness. They fought the elements in every part of the globe, from the Arctic to the Antarctic regions, suffering and enduring starvation and sweating in a way entirely unknown, and little understood, by modern sea-gentlemen. When on shore they were always more or less down at heel, shabby and

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scantily clothed. They were shunned by the society to whom they were the greatest benefactors. Did not the expansion of Empire trade depend upon their courage and enterprising energy?

I often wonder, looking back over a great space of time to my early life when I associated with deep-sea sailors, how it was that men were found willing and, yes, eager, to risk their lives, and dare so much under such vile conditions, for such meagre remuneration as then prevailed.

Whatever be the power that prompted these men to go down to the sea in ships, I do not pretend to know, but understanding to some extent the conditions under which they toiled and starved, were buffeted by storm and heat, driven like cattle by brutal shipmasters and mates, I say without fear of contradiction that the sailorman of to-day lives on the borders of paradise, while his sea-fathers of only a generation ago toiled on the very 'Hobs of Hell'. I also assert that it was the indomitable spirit of the pioneers of the merchant service that made the British Empire so great and world-wide.

I often wonder how many of these hard old shellbacks, neglected and ignored by an unappreciative nation, died by the roadside, or in some charitable institution with soul-crushing regulations, or in slums of the vilest, vanished into an unknown grave.

What of the ships that these men loved? Yes, loved! In those days there was much to lavish one's affection upon. Every one of the old craft's movements was closely watched and thoroughly understood far better than many modern husbands understand their wives. What of the ships, I say, that these men have loved; that they have cursed with such familiarities as, 'Roll,

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yer bitch! Roll, me blasted darling; and Ay and Ay,' until the very ropes and spars reeked with their profanities and blasphemies? The lumbering old floating hells of oak and teak, the iron and steel clippers, ships which passed up and down the Thames in my childhood days!

A new class of ship has evolved a new class of seaman. The brass-bound, public-school-educated, stylish steamship officer and his Royal Naval Reserve disciplined underling have little or no time to listen to the old school, whose yarns are dismissed as distorted half truths called 'Cuffers.' Cuffers they may have been. Some of the stories told by these old men may not have been strictly authentic, but in my possession I have a collection of yarns spun by men who assisted in a small way to make history in world-famous ships—ships which are now relegated to the scrap-heap, or in the 'rotten row' of some seaport town are converted into storage hulks.

The souls of these grand old ships have been ruthlessly slaughtered by the vandals of commerce. He who sneers at my statement has never sat on the flying jib-boom end, during a moonlit night, on a craft with all kites aloft, drawing free and taut, flying through the sparkling waters like a Divine inspiration, a manifestation of superb grandeur. As Wilson, the American poet, once wrote:

*'As if the beauteous ship enjoyed  
The beauties of the sea,  
She lifteth up her stately head  
And saileth joyfully.*

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*A lovely path before her lies*

*A lovely path behind.*

*She sails amidst the loveliness*

*Like a thing with heart and mind.'*

No longer the tall masts bend to the cloud of snow-white canvas. No longer the shanty is heard stealing across our harbours to the clang of capstan pawls and tramp of sea-booted men. These old craft lie at rest and, like the men who once formed their crews, are forgotten.

The nerve-racking scream of the siren and hoot of the smoke-vomiting steamer has superseded them. The turning-wheel of evolution has introduced new phases into the lives of those who go down to the sea in ships; old ideas have been quietly and unostentatiously jettisoned.

The life of the whaler has changed. That industry is now conducted by small steamers provided with quick-firing guns, deadly weapons called harpoon guns which will kill a whale on sight. There is no longer any sport or romance in chasing whales, except in the enhanced profits for whaling-ship owners. The excitement of the open whaleboat and the strenuous task of 'trying out' has gone for ever.

The whaleman, and the clipper-ship sailor, has become a rare bird and will shortly pass into history, as the Thames wherryman of a generation ago.

In spite of the progress made by science there is still a considerable amount of misunderstanding concerning the great mammals of the sea. To the landsman, and indeed many seafaring men of modern times, these creatures are little known. Not that the story I now

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offer must be considered an attempt to describe the whale family scientifically. It is simply an account of a voyage in a whaling-ship of the old school, under conditions which were a decided improvement upon the general conditions prevailing under the leadership of a man who may be recognised by some of his surviving friends and acquaintances, but whose name I withhold.

Some members of the crew of my ship, which I have called the *Anna Lombard* (her real name does not matter), will tell some strange stories. For many of them, my former shipmates, had a unique history, being specially selected by the organiser of the expedition on that account, and although so many years have passed, and many of these old shipmates have sought Valhalla, the task I have set myself is one of exquisite joy and pleasure.

It is to the memory of those departed shipmates that I affectionately dedicate my story, *Deep-Sea Bubbles*.

HENRY HEDGER BOOTES

*Auckland, New Zealand*



## CHAPTER I

### JOE SPLENDID

**I**T was a cold, miserable day in early March, in the year 188-. A strong north-easterly wind seemed to pierce through the thickest clothing, striking one's flesh like blades of steel, in spite of all efforts to warm up the blood by most strenuous exercise.

It was a long tramp from North Greenwich Pier to the shipping office at the East India Docks, where I sometimes wandered in my search for a ship. On this particular unpleasant morning the distance seemed to be greater and more melancholy. The narrow streets of dirty bricks and mortar, the shuffling gait of the inhabitants, irritated me, and I longed to go far away from dirty London and its ever-present poverty to more sunny regions. The memory of that morning lingers in my mind, a most unpleasant experience, and my heart went out in sympathy and pity to the people of the neighbourhood, condemned to dwell for all time in those unsavoury surroundings; maybe until death released them.

I arrived at the famous office that was once the headquarters of a noted shipping firm, whose fleet of fine clipper ships has long since been scattered to the four winds of heaven by the unkindly hand of old Father Time and the coming of steam.

Long before the doors of the underground waiting-



rooms were opened a large concourse of unemployed seamen, longshoremen, cadgers and crimps, had assembled, and woe betide the unthinking person who exhibited a plug of tobacco, or any other sign of prosperity. That mob of cosmopolitan men were more or less on the very brink of starvation, for at the time I speak of, a serious depression in shipping circles—caused, so 'twas said, by the transition from sail to steam—was creating quite a flutter among those who earned their living in ships, and whose wages were, at the best of times, extremely meagre.

As I reached the outskirts of the crowd, I met an acquaintance of the previous day who was anxious to exchange the latest news in return for a pipe of plug cut—a cadger's pipeful, be it clearly understood. From this worthy I gathered that on a notice-board which could be seen through the window was posted quite a lot of information concerning the fact that about fifty men would be required to sign articles on various ships before noon.

By the interested glances through the window, and the animated eagerness which prevailed, I could see that many of these men, who for weeks had been regular attendants, anxiously looking for employment, now anticipated jobs. I meditatively surveyed the mob of half-starved men, who represented nearly every nation in Europe. I thought what a desperate-looking lot of pirates they appeared, but I smiled with pride as my eye fell upon men whom I recognised as deep-sea sailors, my own class; for my experience in windjammers had taught me not to look a merchant sailor in the clothes, but in the eye. During many long voyages I

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had discovered that the roughest-looking man sometimes possessed the largest and most open heart. So I beat my hands (all same London cabby) and stamped my feet to circulate the blood, and under my breath severely criticised the Government for not establishing "fire devils" on street corners, as I had seen the previous winter in some Russian town, where public street fires are quite common in severe weather.

Presently there was a general stampede for the underground chamber, and in the scramble I ran full tilt into a dapper little fellow clad in a tight-fitting "monkey coat" with his head swathed in many coils of a woollen muffler. I could see little but his eyes, which flashed at me a most familiar stare, and I immediately recognised him as one Joe Splendid, a former shipmate. I think this man, who was a native of Dundee, had some time signed on nearly every ship which claimed the Scottish whaling town as its port of registration. He was over fifty years of age, but his movements proclaimed him much younger. He had been at sea since he was twelve. He was extremely popular in our last ship; for over two years he held the rating of boatswain, and when we parted at the pay-table in the Board of Trade offices in Liverpool, some twelve months before, I thought he had returned to his native town to marry the lady of whom he so often spoke in terms of deep affection.

We grasped each other by the hand, overjoyed at the unexpected meeting, as only old shipmates can be, and when we at last gained admittance to the warmth of the great coke fire in the "chain locker" of the building (as these chambers were familiarly called by sailors), we exchanged reminiscences.

In a few words we briefly reviewed all that had taken place since we last met, and then he told me that on the previous morning he had been lucky enough to meet a captain who was seeking a crew for his whaling-ship.

"I thought you were going to retire?" I questioned after a while.

"Yes," he answered with a disappointed air, "so I was—at least, that was my intention; but not now, because the girl I wanted to marry has selected another husband."

He smiled and gazed round at the crowd of waiting seamen for a while, then continued firmly, "I've done with women. Fact is, old man, no man going to sea has a right to ask any woman to marry him."

He made the latter assertion with an air of quiet resignation, but a far-away look came into his eyes, and although I quite agreed with his statement, I think, in Joe's case, it was indeed a question of sour grapes, or, at least, a lady's determination to select a younger man for her mate.

"And you?" asked Joe, as he spread his hands to catch the warmth of the glowing embers.

"I have been on shore for three months," I replied carelessly. "Just managed to gain my second ticket by the merest chance. Have been looking for a ship these three weeks. Think I'll try the coast this time."

Just then all eyes were turned towards a large black-board, whereon an attendant had written an announcement that crews for three sailing-ships, bound for South America, New Zealand and Japan respectively, were to be selected at 11.30—"NO BRITISH NEED APPLY."

Such a notice was quite common in those days.

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British seamen were hanging about London and other English seaports in hundreds, while foreigners of every description were eagerly sought for. British shipowners flatly refused to employ their own countrymen. It was their mode of retaliation upon the common sailor, who year by year was making greater demands for better conditions.

A murmur of discontent arose from the throats of many hungry Britishers that cold morning. The men strongly resented the malicious, almost triumphant air of the foreign element present. Many hardy Norsemen and Germans pushed their way to the window of the registrar's office which would shortly open to receive the discharges of those selected to fill the situations.

The Britishers looked on scornfully at this display of savagery—this usurping of their right to live. Vehement were the curses showered upon the successful ones as they disappeared through the doorway at the call of the clerk, and for a while Joe Splendid and I stood at the back of the crowd, our faces scarlet with the fire of indignation towards those responsible for such an outrage.

Seated against the whitewashed wall was a man who seemed to be apart from the crowd. His clothing was neat and clean; a long double-breasted overcoat of blue cloth suggested that he might possibly be an officer seeking a job before the mast. He rose to his feet and took a turn up and down the room. Rage and indignation almost overwhelmed him.

"Look at yon fellow," said Joe, smiling.

"Yes," I answered, "I am watching him. There'll be some fun in a minute."

Presently the storm burst, for he dashed into the group of Britishers who had become separated from the foreign element on the first appearance of the noxious notice, and he shouted in a voice of thunder:

"A pretty fine state of affairs, isn't it? 'No British need apply!' And you fellows standing around like a lot o' tame galoots, saying nought to the damned square-heads taking yer jobs away!"

Someone ran up the stone steps leading to the street and returned with two very stout policemen. The noisy one saw them coming and went to meet them.

"I say, yous two, come here. Look at this. Did yer ever? So help me, I never did think I'd live to see it; strike me if I did. What are we coming to?"

The men in blue exchanged winks and, like the good London bobbies that they were, suggested that the noisy one seek another shipping office.

"Try Wells Street, or Tower Hill," said they.

"Garn!" returned the sailor, much to our amusement. "It's the same everywhere."

Then, standing before them, he looked them seriously in the face and continued:

"Suppose yous two blokes were out o' work and you rolled up at Scotland Yard to look for a policeman's job, and yous saw a notice stuck up like that—'No British need apply!' Wouldn't yous wish to wreck the whole damn place and bring to book those responsible?"

Both guardians of the peace smiled good-humouredly at such an impossibility. They could scarcely imagine London policed by foreigners, and they said so in no uncertain tones; but their timely appearance and good-

tempered banter changed an awkward situation. I remember feeling extremely indignant and thinking that whoever was responsible for that objectionable notice should be forced to toil for the rest of his natural life on board a hard old windjammer.

While I was thus musing there came through a far doorway—known to nautical men as the skipper's door—a well-dressed stranger, who paused and gazed at the cosmopolitan crowd as if taking stock of those present. There was an immediate silence. It seemed almost that life and death depended upon what the stranger said; everyone appeared scared to breathe, lest he miss a sentence. Presently the newcomer demanded sternly:

"Are there any men here with whaling experience? I have jobs for several men."

The silence was intense, and everyone seemed to heave a sigh of regret. I noticed that the noisy one followed the policemen up the steps, and Joe Splendid was the only person who offered himself, for the stranger was the captain of whom he had spoken.

I had no intention whatever of offering my services. I was in search of a berth in some coastal steamship, or a craft making short voyages to warmer climates. At least, that was the programme I had mapped out for my future. My last long voyage in the Dundee whaler B—— caused me to shun deep-water fishing. But my ready cash was running short. I had spent large sums in preparing for the Board of Trade examinations; my term at a Tower Hill Nautical Academy had made a tremendous hole in my banking account, and, week after week, as I searched the Port of London for a situation, the depression in trade seemed more apparent,

"Young man, I see you have been following the sea for eight years; that you have made yourself proficient as a boatman and harpooner. You also hold a second ticket. Good! Consider yourself engaged as third mate of the *Anna Lombard*."

I cannot say that I was in any way overjoyed with the idea, for a spasm of regret pervaded me. I wished that the offer had come from the captain of some coastal schooner or small steamer. The prospects of voyaging once more in a Hell Ship (as whalers were called in those days) was not too brilliant. Much as I approved of this gentlemanly-looking Captain, I knew quite enough of the sea to realise that captains sometimes resemble the chameleon. They drop their land manners off the Nore lightship; and a vague suspicion entered my soul. Had I done right in offering my services? As I watched him pocket my precious papers a chilly feeling of dread came over me, for my mind would persist in harking back to "Cape Stiff" and its evil weather, its hardships and mountainous seas.

Under the influence of the Captain's attractive manners and the warm grog which sent the blood surging through my veins, I found myself taking final instructions from the Captain, who shook hands and went his way to continue his search for the crew of the *Anna Lombard*.

Somehow I did not like the idea of giving my papers into the keeping of another man. I suppose all young officers swell with pride and self-importance while the famous Board of Trade "ticket" is in their own possession. One feels like proclaiming his success at the examinations from the housetops. How eagerly one seizes the *Shipping Gazette*, and when one's name is

## JOE SPLENDID

published in the list of successful candidates the world seems a very nice place in which to live. Thus it was with me when my papers disappeared into Captain Lombard's pocket. All my former resolutions to shun whaling-ships vanished, which shows that the best-laid schemes of mice and men often go astray by the chance meeting with an old shipmate.

I was to join the *Anna Lombard* at Gravesend in three days' time. She was now on her way from Antwerp in charge of a crew of "runners" (so called because they had been engaged for the run across the North Sea, according to the demands of the insurance act).

I had plenty of time to prepare for the voyage and to say good-bye to my friends in Greenwich. Once having taken so serious a step—as it appeared to me—I was anxious to commence the voyage, and the three days' grace seemed an unnecessary delay.



## CHAPTER II

### ARISTOCRACY OF THE DEEP

**S**NOW fell as I stepped from the train at Gravesend Pier Station. Having collected my baggage, I made my way to the landing-stage. At the Customs House I discovered that my ship had arrived from Antwerp the previous evening towed by the tug *Storm Cock*, and now lay at anchor in the Lower Hope roadstead, just below Coalhouse Point.

I grumbled considerably, cursing the weather and the fates that had made me a sailor. I soon found myself standing on the deck of a steam-launch which belonged to a well-known firm of ship-chandlers. The fact that this boat was conveying stores to the *Storm Cock* was pointed out to me by a customs officer.

There were a large number of clippers at anchor in the Pool—that stretch of water between Tilbury landing-stage and Coalhouse—for a strong head wind had been blowing for many days, in fact, all through January and February. Easterly had followed easterly intermittently, making a rich harvest for tug-boat owners, much to the annoyance of the masters of homeward-bound sailing-ships.

When I saw so many ships my soul swelled with pride at the thought that I belonged to the most noble profession ever conceived by the inventive genius of mankind. The sight of that great forest of masts and yards in a measure dispelled much of my former resent-

ment towards the fates that had once more sent me forth to seek my fortune in a Pacific whaler.

Close behind the famous old ship *Wellington*, one of the finest and most graceful craft that ever entered the Thames, lay a large composite ship of some thousand tons register, denuded of all top hamper above the topmast crosstrees. She was a beautiful model, and at the end of her cutwater rose the magnificent figure of a draped female bust. The figurehead was the most beautiful I had ever seen, and just beyond, painted in letters of gold, on the knight-heads, I saw the words "Anna Lombard." Her long jib-boom was lashed in-board, the extreme end of the flying jib-boom protruding through the bowsprit cap, the heel being lashed to the after end of the forecastle.

Silver-grey was the colour of her topsides above the waterline, and the graceful sheer of her well-moulded hull caused her to resemble some of the famous models of American design, built for speed rather than for cargo carrying. As I glanced at her lower and topsail yards, I thought how heavily sparred she was, and my heart sank when I saw on her yard-arms studding-sail boom irons. In those first few moments, as the store launch drew alongside the great tug-boat, I thought that I was in for a terrible time, and in the light of past experience wondered what kind of man-handling officers I was doomed to serve under.

However, there was no time for meditation as I clambered over the snowclad decks of the tug. My mind went back to one day in July when, in most glorious sunshine, that selfsame tug had towed my ship into the brilliant waters of the Thames, 104 days from Port Lyttelton, New Zealand.

I climbed up the side of the *Anna Lombard*, my heart beating a solemn requiem, longing for my old ship and the summer sunshine. As I stood on the main deck, sinking deeply into a heap of drifted snow, I gazed round expectantly, but could see no sign of a watchman. The galley doors were closed, but smoke issued from the stove-pipe above the deck-house. I noticed that smoke was also coming from the stove-pipes of several cabin bogies, so I sought the shelter of the poop overhang, for a heavy north-easterly squall was driving across the river. Opening a door under the poop, I stood in an alleyway where the air was warm and soothing, and as I shook the snowflakes from my greatcoat I called in an undertone:

"Anyone on board?"

"Aye, aye!" answered a voice from an open doorway at the after end, and almost immediately I was confronted by an elderly person with the sweetest smile that I had ever seen on a man. As he came towards me his face seemed to light up with a welcome greeting. I noticed that his hair was long and white, hanging in thick clusters about his shoulders. He was cleanshaven but for snow-white side whiskers which were cut level with the lobes of small shell-like ears, more like the ears of a beautiful woman. He was clad in a well-cut suit of blue cloth, and he called to mind a picture of some foreign noble sportsman setting out on a yachting cruise. His every movement was of perfect deportment and studied grace which almost took my breath away.

"Come in, sir," he said kindly. "You are Mr.—er—Mr.——?"

"Hedger," I corrected.

"Oh yes," said he. "You are the third officer Captain Lombard mentions in his letter. Come right in, sir. Make yourself at home. You are welcome."

"My dunnage is being handed over the tug," I said. "If you will kindly tell me where I berth, I will not trouble you, for it is very cold outside."

He rang a bell and a Chinese steward appeared, to whom he said:

"Ching, go forward and get two men to assist you to convey Mr. Hedger's luggage to his berth." (I noticed that he did not exactly order, but requested in such a way as to convey the idea that he was asking a favour.)

The steward bowed and vanished, and the old gentleman turned to me, saying kindly:

"Follow me, sir; you must be tired and cold after your journey."

Like a man in a dream, I followed. Never before had I set foot in such a cabin. One side of the bulk-head from the deck to beams—from floor to ceiling as shore folk say—was fitted with shelves packed tight with books, each shelf labelled, and each book ticketed. The furnishings were of polished mahogany with cedar panelling, adorned and enriched with copper mouldings burnished with the brightness of solid gold. There were plush-covered divans and easy-chairs of the Chesterfield type. I had never seen such luxury on board any sailing-ship. Small wonder that I was somewhat bewildered, almost embarrassed, for I scarcely knew how to approach this dear old sea-father who assisted me out of my overcoat as though it was indeed a privilege to be of service.

He struck a handbell on the table and, to my astonish-

ment, another Chinese—a tall, rather handsome specimen of that race—appeared at the doorway, and with folded hands silently awaited orders.

"Kong," said the old gentleman kindly, "let me introduce Mr. Hedger, third officer. Then please bring three Cape Horners."

The Chinese bowed low, and the fact that I offered my hand so spontaneously sealed the bond of our future friendship. Kong San, the chief steward, vanished, while I puzzled my brain wondering what "Cape Horners" were.

My host motioned me to a seat by the tiny iron box-like stove, which was aglow with the burning embers of a coal fire. It was a very pleasant sensation to sink into an easy-chair and absorb into one's half-frozen body the warmth from this tiny stove, which is known on board ship as a cabin bogie. The Cape Horners duly arrived in the shape of strong doses of hot rum with sugar and lemon, carried on a massive silver tray of oriental workmanship.

"To our better acquaintance," said the mate, as we raised our glasses, and the steward added in the most perfect English:

"To the success of our enterprise."

As I drank the blood-stirring beverage I was almost afraid to move, lest I wake from my dream and the fairy ship vanish. I feared to discover myself out in the violent snow squalls, and the experience of the moment but a delusion. My kind host gazed at me with a merry twinkle in his eye, and the steward smiled kindly as he left the room. I think my face must have betrayed my perplexity, for the old man said feelingly:

"Now you feel better, I know."

"Yes, sir," I answered. "I certainly do; but please tell me, have I made a mistake? Am I on board of the *Anna Lombard*, Pacific whaler?"

"You certainly are, my friend," he returned with a smile, "and your humble servant is Peter Haskell, chief officer of the same *Anna Lombard*."

He bowed very low, a little theatrically, I thought.

Never before had I received such a welcome when joining a ship. Neither did I think such an one possible. True, I was very young, having just turned twenty-four years of age, and had seldom herded with the after-guard on my previous voyages. All my experience of the sea had been in great clippers, except an interval of two years spent in a Pacific whaler of the old school, a ship that was officered by men who were famous for their knowledge of their calling, but who were almost devoid of refinement and polish. As my host moved about the cabin, his slippered feet sinking deeply into the neutral-tinted Persian carpet, I gazed at his face and almost youthful figure, trying to judge his age, but could not. When he smiled he revealed a set of exquisite white teeth perfectly formed. I was also puzzled about his nationality, for he spoke with a decidedly continental accent, though his English was perfect—a perfection sometimes met with in highly educated and cultured Germans or Austrians. Furthermore, the furniture in the cabin was extremely heavy, almost sombre, while in one corner of the room hung a portrait of my host. He was dressed in a strange uniform, certainly not English. On his shoulders were long-fringed epaulettes, and his breast was adorned with orders and stars, intermingled with war medals. All these things puzzled me. My gaze wandered to the

bookcase and Mr. Haskell commenced in a most unconventional way to talk of books and literature generally. My answers to his questions and apparent knowledge of books and modern writers seemed to please him, and when he discovered that I was a student of classical literature he seemed delighted to find a kindred spirit in one so young and offered me the freedom of his valuable library. His knowledge of maritime history was extensive; he must have spent his long life in collecting facts concerning the growth and development of the world's overseas commerce. Then he told me that although he had been a sailor for over fifty years, with intervals of shore rest, he had never before been in a whaling-ship, and he looked forward to the present voyage as providing ways and means of obtaining fresh knowledge and experience of a part of his profession he had always wished to study. I thought that he had long since passed the stage of life when men seek knowledge upon any subject involving strenuous labour and, perhaps, hardship. He must surely be well-nigh eighty years of age, and my wonderment increased tenfold.

Presently a gong vibrated through the after end of the ship, and Mr. Haskell informed me that it was the call to lunch, so, after a wash and brush up in a well-appointed bathroom, I followed him to the saloon, where I was introduced to the second officer, a Mr. Richester. He was a pleasant-looking, handsome man of about forty-five years, with a close-clipped imperial beard, and resembled a retired naval officer. He seemed to be on very friendly terms with both the mate and the Chinese steward, who, I noticed, took a seat beside me at the table. There were two Chinese under-

stewards clad in white uniform, and as they supplied our needs I wondered what other surprises were in store for me.

I looked round the saloon in curiosity. It was an unusually large apartment, for the long table provided seating accommodation for twenty people, swivel chairs being arranged, ten on each side of the table.

Ten stateroom doors opened off the saloon, and at the after end, in a large space hung with very heavy plush curtains, was a well-furnished space which opened right aft, forming part of the counter where square, old-fashioned port-holes opened on a neatly rounded stern. The partitions and walls of the saloon were panelled in bird's-eye maple, intermingled with highly polished mahogany and teak. The furnishings and upholstery were in brown and old gold. A large marble-topped, mirror-backed sideboard laden with silver plate occupied a portion of the forward end, while a very fine picture of the ship under all sail, with studding-sails below and aloft, hung from the forward side of the rudder case.

I concluded that the craft was of French build, and when my eyes wandered to the skylight above the table, from which were suspended three antique copper lamps, I saw a brass tablet fixed to a transom-beam, which informed me that the ship was built at Toulon some thirty years before.

I then interested myself in the two officers who sat opposite me. They were a strange pair—the venerable ancient mariner and the second officer, whose jet-black hair and clipped beard stood out in strong contrast to the snow-white hair of the chief. There was no mistaking the country of Mr. Richester's birth, for he



spoke with that refinement of tone so characteristic of the educated Londoner.

I began to lose that regretful feeling which had pervaded me since meeting Captain Lombard in the chain locker of the shipping office. My spirits rose as I contemplated the coming voyage; but I could not help wondering if these two strange persons would prove themselves devils on the high seas, though they appeared to me at the moment to be sea angels. I seemed to have suddenly dropped into an entirely new atmosphere, and felt an irresistible, impenetrable silence creep over me. I almost feared to speak for fear of revealing to my superiors how ignorant I actually was of things outside the profession of a whaler.

Such a repast it had never before been my lot to partake of on board ship. It was served in silence by two master hands who attended to us with machine-like precision, which was a revelation to me. The crockery and mess-traps were all so wonderful to one who was accustomed to enamel ware and tin plates and pots, and had I been offered a wager to name the courses served I could not have done so.

One thing struck me as being strange. Neither of my superior officers questioned me concerning my previous experience. An interchange of reminiscences was quite usual in those days, especially when seafaring men first became acquainted, just as it is one of the chief characteristics of deep-water men to-day, or as I once heard it expressed, this freedom of speech and mutual exchange of experiences, which shore folk are so prone to misunderstand, and often denounce with an ignorant sneer as swank, or stretches of an elastic imagination.

I think my companions saw my apparent embarrass-

ment, and for the most part the meal was partaken in silence. But I could not help comparing these cultured gentlemen with some shipmates of former voyages who had been rough and uncouth, snatching at their food like animals subjected to periods of starvation and famine. The table manners of my fellow-diners were perfect. Their courtesy and grace seemed to carry one away to a period that certainly did not belong to our time, and when the meal was finished, both the second mate and the steward rose from the table and bowed to the veteran mate in solemn grandeur, reminding me of stories of the time of Nelson, when three-cornered hats were worn.

I was then escorted to my berth, a small room at the forward end of the starboard alleyway, sheltered by the poop overhang. It was a comfortable little room with two large square port-holes, one seaward and the other looking forward, giving me a view of the deck to the fore-castle head. The single bunk arranged upon a series of drawers and lockers, a table, a soft-cushioned lounge, and a long wardrobe charmed me. There was also a desk, a compass above the bed, a clock on the bulk-head, a large bronze lamp suspended from the centre beams, while a tiny reading-lamp hung on gimbles was fixed at the bunk head; and I must not forget the silk curtains of the port-holes and bed, hanging on brightly polished brass rods. A carpet of some soft woollen material completed the furniture, and filled my soul with joy.

My luggage had been brought to my room, so, assisted by Mr. Richester, I placed my sea-chest and trunks in security and sea-going order. While he was admiring my sextant—a present from my late captain

—I tried to pump him concerning the ship and her coming voyage, but could obtain no satisfaction, so I determined to possess my soul in patience, as he reminded me all would be made clear in time. So when I had arranged my gear to my liking—my photos hung to my satisfaction—I could scarcely believe that I was on board a whaler. It seemed so impossible, almost like an Arabian Night story, and when my companion left me, I lit a cigar and sat down to reason with myself and survey my new surroundings. Was it any wonder that I breathed a prayer that was somewhat thus: "Oh, may this luxury last for ever. All the horrors and discomforts of a Cape Horn buster, all the terrors of a Western Ocean blizzard, will I gladly endure. Only give me this comfortable room with that well-found table, and I crave no better treatment this side of Valhalla."

I stood gazing through the forward port-hole along the snow-covered decks. I saw that the lower masts were built of mild steel with the usual wire shrouds, finishing off dead-eyes to chain plates of an old style. The sheer-poles—iron bars which spread the dead-eyes—were just level with the taff-rail. This type of rigging was rapidly passing out of use owing to the introduction of rigging-screws. In this ship it gave the shrouds and back-stays tremendous spread and power. The lower and topsail yards were also built of mild-steel plates and looked extremely slender. The topsail ties were a chain purchase exceedingly heavy. As I remarked before, there was nothing aloft above the cross-trees. The top-gallant mast and royals were on deck and lay beneath a snowdrift, apparently secured to the standards of the bulwarks. The lower yards were all

fitted for carrying studding-sails, and my heart nearly stopped beating when I saw these fittings of a bygone age. I had never been shipmates with these sails, but I had heard a great deal about them. What deep-water man had not, at the time of which I write? There were many crack clippers, even in those days, that carried them, but every sailor sought to avoid them, for some skippers use them on the homeward run. The life of a sailor is not considered when making a passage. Many of the old school will remember the well-known sailor's curse: "May your liver twist from port to star-board, in a ship with one stunsail boom and no tobacco." The true significance of this curse is little understood by modern seamen.

There was little space between the break of the poop deck and the mainmast, as a long deck-house occupied this portion of the main deck. Here berthed the petty officers, *i.e.* the donkeyman, boatswain, cooper and sail-maker. Between the fore and main masts another long deck-house offered accommodation for the engine-house, a spare apartment called the refining room, the carpenter's berth and a large galley, or cookhouse. On the roof of this long deck-house was secured by iron bands an iron tank, which I first thought was part of the donkey-boiler, but subsequent investigation proved it to be part of the refining plant, which I will endeavour to describe later.

From my port-hole I could just discern the scuttlebutt of the between-decks accommodation for the seamen. Under the fore-castle head I could see the windlass with a fine new capstan above. There was one part of the superstructure which charmed me. It was the fore-and-aft bridge. This I thought would prove

of great advantage during heavy weather. The boat's davits, which worked on slides, were of the derrick type and were operated by levers and cross-bars from the bulwarks. Each of the six boats stood on chocks placed on skids about six feet or so above the deck.

A violent snow squall came across the river just then, so I reached for my oilskin and sea-boots, and was soon in sea-kit again. At that moment I felt ready to face anything in the shape of weather for the sake of the *Anna Lombard*. When I reached the main deck and mounted the poop ladder, I saw Mr. Richester muffled up in a great watch-coat and sea-boots casting off the lines of the tug-boat, so I went to his assistance. Then we sought the lee of the charthouse, a roomy deck-house on the poop deck, for the wind caused the snow to whirl about us, shutting out our view for a while, and the tug with its dense-smoking funnels soon disappeared in the storm.

The tide was making up, and although we were anchored well out of the fairway, it was necessary to keep a sharp look-out. In tacking across the river, deeply laden barges sometimes had a nasty habit of scraping a ship's side, perhaps carrying away boom or boats, their helmsmen shouting and yelling requests to get out of the blooming road, and in picturesque terms informing you that "yer 'ave no right to all the —— river." This privilege is the divine right of the London Bargee!

I could see a man walking and stamping the fore-castle head, ever and anon warming his bemitted hands at a smoking stove-pipe which protruded from the deck.

"Will you go forward, Mr. Hedger, and tell the look-out man to ring the bell should it come up thick?"

## ARISTOCRACY OF THE DEEP

asked Mr. Richester, and I set off along the deck to obey my first order, eager to make the acquaintance of the man on watch, for by the cut of him I thought he might turn out to be my old shipmate, Joe Splendid.

## CHAPTER III

### A DEEP-SEA FAMILY

WHEN I reached the fore-castle head I found that the look-out man *was* Joe Splendid. He explained that he had been on board since early morning. He was extremely enthusiastic about the ship and the forthcoming voyage, which, he said was a scientific expedition instituted by several medical men for the purpose of finding out something about the whale family. This was just his rough-and-ready way of describing the vague information he had gathered from his conversation with Captain Lombard, and with it he appeared to be perfectly satisfied.

To him the *Anna Lombard* meant a job, and a good one—nothing else mattered; but like myself he looked with grave suspicion at the heavy spars and running gear, the studding-sail boom irons on the topsail and lower yard arms, and other out-of-date portions of the vessel's rig.

A steam-launch drew alongside, interrupting our exchange of confidences, under the lee of the jib-boom end, which afforded some shelter from the driving snow squalls. Captain Lombard greeted me with a genial smile and a hearty handshake. He was accompanied by a lady who was warmly clad in a bear-skin coat. I assisted her to the deck, down the gangway steps, almost lifting her off her feet as I caught her in my arms.

"Thank you," she said with a sweet smile, then turning to the Captain she laughingly continued: "Dad, you mean old thing. I nearly fell into a heap of snow!"

"Not you, my lass," replied her father smiling, as he shook the snow from his greatcoat. "You are too sure-footed. Anyway, let me introduce my third officer. Mrs. Richester, Mr. Hedger."

She took my hand and smiled into my eyes. I could just see her tiny face in the folds of the bearskin, and thought that in all my life I had never seen a more beautiful pair of laughing eyes.

I opened the starboard door into the alleyway, while the Captain returned to the gangway. Then I assisted Mrs. Richester out of her heavy coat, and once more those laughing eyes beamed upon me by way of thanks: then she glanced anxiously along the passage, and with another smile and a gentle "Excuse me, please," she hastened towards the saloon, calling:

"Jim, where are you, dear? Peter, you old darling. Why did you not come to meet me?"

The two officers humbly apologised for their apparent neglect, which she ignored by kissing them both, while I stood at the doorway awkwardly holding her coat and handbag, wondering where I should place them.

Presently Kong, the chief steward, came to claim Mrs. Richester's property, saying: "Give me that coat and bag, Mr. Hedger, I will take them to my lady's cabin."

My eyes followed Kong curiously. His superior knowledge of the English language surprised me, for he spoke in deep rich tones, the modulation of his voice making his speech quite musical. What little I



had seen of him had impressed me with the idea that he was a privileged person. At any rate he seemed to be on equal terms with the officers, and the climax of my astonishment came when Mrs. Richester hurried across the saloon and shook hands with him. I thought she was actually about to kiss him also, so pleased did she appear to see him.

"So the lady is the wife of the second mate," I mused as I returned to the quarterdeck where the Captain introduced me to several men, whom I discovered were members of the crew.

An extra heavy snow squall forced us to seek the shelter of the poop overhang, and very soon the ship resembled an Arctic ship. Every rope and spar was covered with snow which piled up in miniature drifts wherever opportunity offered.

I took stock of the strangers (there were five of them) with the experienced eye of a critic. I was certain each man was a sailor—a fully qualified deep-water man. There was something about the windjammer sailor in those days that could not possibly be mistaken by one of the profession. These men had homogenesis written all over them, and as this story in many ways concerns the crew of the *Anna Lombard* I take this opportunity of describing briefly the men who will be mentioned as my story proceeds.

Ark Royd was just sixty-seven years of age when I first met him on that wintry day which is recorded in my diary as one of the most unpleasant days, as far as weather was concerned, that I ever remember in English waters. He was a tall, grizzled, dark-skinned son of the sea with Polynesian blood in his veins.

Time and many climates had lined his face with deep furrows, while his flesh seemed parched and dried like the hide of a crocodile. A close-cropped iron-grey beard matched shaggy and bushy eye-brows, and an otherwise Roman nose was slightly bent to starboard, suggesting former ill-usage. He wore a long grey overcoat covering a well-cut suit of heavy blue cloth, and on his head was a rabbit-skin hat with ear flaps. He spoke with a rather haughty expression, which I thought betrayed good breeding. I subsequently discovered that he was a half-caste Maori and was born on the east coast of New Zealand near the Port of Auckland. He told me that he had previously sailed with Captain Lombard in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company during the early sixties, and had shipped on the *Anna Lombard* as harpooner.

Steve Finlay was a typical London steamboat man of the old school, whose job was that of donkeyman. That is to say, he had charge of the steam-engine which drove the winches and other machinery. He was a short, thick-set man of about fifty-seven years, with jet-black hair, showing signs of becoming grey. His hair appeared below a hard bowler hat, cut completely round, as if a pudding-basin had been used by his barber as a guide, but when he removed his hat to shake off the snowflakes, I saw that the crown of his head was perfectly bald, a fact which later caused some amusement amongst his shipmates, for some wag in the fore-castle asked: "Why does Stevie's head resemble an atoll—or coral island?" The answer was, "Because it is a watery patch with a bush all round it." Indeed so strange did that shiny bald patch appear, that I let my gaze linger upon it to make sure it was

perfectly natural and not a wig protecting his head from the inclement weather.

Bill Jones, the sailmaker, was a native of South Wales, and during the first few moments of our acquaintance he made haste to tell me that he had formerly lived in Penarth, where he had followed his calling in a shore sail-loft. Owing to a depression in trade he had migrated with his family to London in search of employment. After many weeks he had finally decided to seek a sailing-ship. He seemed overjoyed at the prospect of the voyage in the *Anna Lombard*, as his pay was much higher than he had ever hoped to receive in a deep-water ship. Jones was not exactly cross-eyed, but he had a strange way of looking into one's eyes when talking, which was almost uncanny, and made him rather unpopular with his mates. Subsequent events proved that he had a fine baritone voice, and on a rope his stock of shanties seemed inexhaustible. Another remarkable feature was that he was heavily pockmarked; he told me that many years previously he had been shipwrecked in the old *Irondale*, a London barque, on which smallpox had broken out. To use his own words, he had escaped death by the skin of his teeth.

Maurice Casey, the carpenter's mate and cooper, was a true son of Ireland, full of fun and ready wit. His dark eyes and handsome face made him a general favourite with all hands. He was tall, but his shoulders were slightly bent and rounded. I tried to guess his age, but could not. Whenever questioned concerning his age he would place the index finger of his right hand upon his forehead and gaze aloft, saying:

"Sure now, me boy, I've seen—I've seen—let me see

now, and I will tell you. I've seen—just forty summers."

Some of his shipmates declared he would never again see fifty. On this particular day, as we sheltered from the flying snow, Casey endeavoured to monopolise the conversation by telling us about his last ship—that time-worn, ever-pet theme of deep-water men. The last ship was always more or less a perfect craft.

The last member of the group of strangers was a tall, heavily built man with a thick black beard and long black hair, making perfect protection for his massive head and jaws. He was clad in a long, tight-fitting coat with sheepskin collar, while the extreme ends of his trouser-legs were tucked into half-leg sea-boots, round the top of which was more sheepskin. His round sheepskin hat with ear-flaps proclaimed him to be a Russian, and when he introduced himself to me it was not in the pigeon English of the Baltic ports, but in the English of an educated man. His name was Ivan Domeroff. In very polite tones he told me he was the ship's carpenter, then with a nod to the others he strode forward, and in spite of the blinding snow squalls, overhauled a boat's fall, and requested a man in the steam-launch to pass up his luggage. Casey hastened to assist him; then one of the stewards' staff escorted the petty officers to their berths.

They did indeed seem to be a remarkable lot of men, and I approved of the Captain's selection.

During the afternoon several men came on board, and between the squalls, kit-bags and seamen's chests were hoisted on board under the supervision of Mr. Richester.

"These men have not signed on yet," said he to me,

as we entered the charthouse just before dark. "Most of them have obtained permission from the Captain to join the ship at once."

I did not answer him, but thought that such a concession had been granted for two reasons. One may be that the men were glad to find work during such an intense depression in trade, and their presence on board would save the expense of employing riggers to sway aloft the masts and yards, which was not an unusual proceeding in those days. One thing impressed me very much. Every man was perfectly sober. The second mate continued:

"You see, Mr. Hedger, this is a special voyage, undertaken at tremendous expense and requires special men. Therefore to secure them the Captain brings them on board as he finds them, and their wages commence immediately."

"Did you say that we were going on a special cruise?" I questioned as I filled my pipe from my companion's offered plug.

"Yes," he remarked. "If you do not already know, the *Anna Lombard* has been purchased for that purpose. We leave in the course of a week or so for the Pacific in search of sperm whale."

"Shall we not fish the Atlantic?" I asked eagerly.

"We may," he returned, "but not on this side of the River Plate." Then, as he went down the companion stairs leading into the cuddy, he continued:

"No doubt Captain Lombard will explain to you later, but this much I might tell you, sir. We are not an ordinary whaling-ship. Our mission is to seek pure spermaceti."

I sat on the flag locker, and gazed out of the chart-

room window. The storm showed signs of breaking, for a crescent moon was shining through the clouds, and hung in the sky, a silver harbinger of finer weather, and the lights on shore and in the anchorage shone and twinkled, proclaiming to an experienced eye a change.

I had been on board this ship long enough to realise that she was no common whaler, but I was rather puzzled to know why no comment had appeared in the shipping newspapers concerning her. A scientific expedition usually attracts the attention of some enterprising pressman. Anyway, I thanked the kind fates that had led me to her.

That evening at dinner I renewed the acquaintance of Mrs. Richester, the Captain's daughter. I am not gifted with an elaborate power of description, especially where ladies are concerned, so I will simply say that the lady in question was exceedingly charming and winsome. Her skin was like rose-tinted wax; her beautiful dark eyes would ever and anon search one's very soul, as if seeking a kindred purity; her bright auburn hair shone like burnished copper in the light of the saloon lamps, and when she smiled two rows of tiny pearl-like teeth showed between deep-red lips. She seemed to be very much in love with her husband, and I must say, he had eyes for no one but his charming wife. I saw the mate glance across the table, his eyes resting on her face, sadly I thought, and it seemed as though a look of regret, influenced by a sigh of disappointment, came into his face. Perhaps he was thinking of his younger days. Then Mr. Haskell turned to me with questions of my former voyages.

As I recited briefly the story of my short experience of the sea, everyone seemed interested. Even Kong,

who sat beside me at table, seemed to drink in all I said, and from that moment I was received into the fellowship (so to speak) of that happy family. The memory of that first dinner in the saloon of the *Anna Lombard* lingers in my mind to-day. Although so many years have passed, I can see very clearly the long table with its bright silver plate, the well-dressed diners lounging in their chairs in postures of extreme ease. Having dined well they became interested in my story and for a while I alone spoke.

When Mrs. Richester rose from the table Captain Lombard invited me to his cabin. It was a large state-room at the after end of the ship, decorated and furnished like a miniature drawing-room. He asked me several questions bearing upon what I had told them, also concerning my private affairs, and when I assured him there was nothing to prevent my making a lengthy voyage he seemed somewhat pleased. He stood with his back to the cabin stove, his feet firmly planted on the heavy carpet, and rolled to the corner of his jaw a large cigar. Presently he told me the purpose of the voyage, which I will reserve for another chapter.

Our conversation was interrupted by the sound of music proceeding from the saloon, and for a while I sat in the lounge listening to selections by a piano and violin. Mrs. Richester and Peter Haskell were accomplished musicians, and I did not want to leave that comfortable saloon, but duty called me on deck.

The tide was making up the river, and although the squalls were less frequent and had lost much of their violence, the atmosphere was thick and foggy, obliterating the distant shore lights, and making navigation extremely difficult. As afore mentioned we lay at anchor

## A DEEP-SEA FAMILY

in the Lower Hope roadstead on the north-east side, well over towards the Sands of Mucking Flat, one of the safest anchorages in the Thames, but on a foggy night no anchorage is a safe one.

At eight o'clock I went on deck muffled in a thick sea-coat, an old friend which had served me well during a long Alaskan winter. As I passed through the chart-house I saw that the temperature was rising, also that the barometer had risen considerably since sunset.

Mr. Richester was walking the quarterdeck, watching the storm-clouds and the struggles of the moon to pierce the rolling mists. When he saw me equipped for keeping watch he said kindly:

"You may turn in, sir. I have set the watches for the night. Yours is from 12 till 4."

I thanked him, and for a moment strode beside him, then I said: "If you care to let me take the double watch, I will gladly do so, Mr. Richester."

I realised instantly that I had made an error, verging on a breach of discipline, but I wanted to do something to show my appreciation of the kindness bestowed upon me. Furthermore, if I had had a wife on board I would have gladly accepted any offer that would have enabled me to linger by her side in so cosy a place as the saloon of the *Anna Lombard*, but my superior turned to me and said firmly, but kindly:

"Captain Lombard is extremely particular that his officers conform with the ship's regulations."

Muttering an apology I turned on my heels and went below, determined to be more careful in the future.



## CHAPTER IV

### DRESSING THE "ANNA LOMBARD"

WHEN I relieved the second mate at midnight, I found the weather had improved somewhat, the wind had veered round to the north-west, and the storm-clouds were conspicuously banking up towards the Nore, which proved that the storm was driving down channel in higher altitudes.

The sky shone with myriad stars. The lights of the shipping and those on shore were no longer influenced by the refraction so characteristic of frosty weather. The change was indeed welcome, for the snow which had formerly littered the deck had been washed away by the rain which had accompanied the receding storm seawards. There seemed every prospect of better weather.

The look-out man reported "All's well," and I commenced to pace the deck, meditating upon the coming voyage.

My interview with Captain Lombard the previous evening had enlightened me considerably. One coincidence I must not forget to record. Captain Lombard had been shipmates with my late captain, he having served as chief officer of a Dundee whaler commanded by my old friend and instructor, Captain N——. This was the reason he had so readily offered me the position of third mate of the *Anna Lombard* when I was first introduced by Joe Splendid.

## DRESSING THE ‘ANNA LOMBARD’

Captain Lombard's career in whaling-ships had been a long one. For many years he had commanded ships in the Hudson Bay trade. He was considered an authority on Arctic exploration and deep-sea fishing, and for that reason had been selected to command the present expedition to the Pacific Ocean in search of sperm whale.

The *Anna Lombard* had been purchased from her French owners, who had formerly used the craft to carry convicts to overseas penal settlements, her last trip being to New Caledonia in 1879. She had been built during the late forties for Chinese trade, and as a sample of a French composite ship she was almost the last specimen of her race, and was certainly one of the finest ships ever turned out by her builders. Personal comfort and accommodation seemed to have been the first consideration.

During the fifties she made huge sums of money for her owners in the Chinese coolie traffic. It was during that period that Captain Lombard had first made her acquaintance, having been one of her officers during a recruiting raid on the Chinese coast in 1853, and now to be called upon to take command of her was one of those strange moves of fate not infrequently heard of by men who follow the sea. He briefly hinted how he came to join the ship in those far-off days. I will reserve this story for some more fitting occasion. The skipper's yarn will throw some light upon the coolie trade, when the Western States of America were crying aloud for cheap labour for their development.

The Captain's story showed the old craft's present occupation to be certainly more philanthropic than of

yore. A strange smile hovered round his lips as he explained that her function now was to bring hope into the lives of stricken humanity; a craft which was once notorious—a source of terror to villagers on the coast of China where her crew of desperadoes would kidnap men, women and children, carrying them off to distant lands to a life of bondage, verging upon slavery. This ship was now selected by a number of scientists to wrench from Nature some of her hidden secrets.

A band of wealthy German and English medical men had, after many years of study and experimenting, discovered that pure spermaceti—that wax-like liquid found only in the cavity of a sperm whale—possessed wonderful medical properties. “These gentlemen,” said the Captain confidentially, “consider that they have discovered the very elixir of life.”

Large sums of money had been subscribed secretly; a company registered in Hamburg; the *Anna Lombard* purchased—a ship which was discovered lying idle in some out-of-the-way corner of the dock in Antwerp; a craft considered to be most suitable owing to her superior accommodation and strength of construction. She was at once placed in dry dock and found to be just as sound and seaworthy as when she first came out of the builders’ hands. A slight alteration to her deck-houses had been made to provide accommodation for a steam-engine and an apparatus for refining spermaceti. This was carried in a special room next to the engine-house. Additional davits, a new-fangled windlass and winches were fitted, machinery calculated to save labour, and the ship was sent to London to be refitted, and to secure a crew of experienced men.

Needless to say, gentle reader, the old craft was not always known as the *Anna Lombard*. That is the name adopted by the writer, a name that is near enough to the one given to the ship by her Captain in honour of his wife.

Several gentlemen attached to a South American school of medical science had also subscribed to the venture, and I discovered that on leaving London we were to clear for the Argentine. As the purpose of the expedition was known only to a few people directly interested, I was bound to secrecy and requested not to permit myself to be questioned in any way by outsiders seeking information concerning our business; so it will be seen that the chance meeting with my old shipmate Joe Splendid had led me into strange pastures, a coincidence which I now began to appreciate in spite of the vagueness of the issue.

The hours passed away in quiet loneliness. I thought of the coming voyage from every aspect. Whatever the issue, personally I would not be affected, but nevertheless I seemed to be influenced by some strange power, a force I could not explain or account for.

The wind died away as the tide ran seawards; the cold stillness was almost uncanny. I did not wonder that sailors called the middle watch the "graveyard watch." Superstitious men considered that at that time of the night the souls of dead sailors walked abroad, filling the minds of the living with strange misgivings and omens of future happenings. I was once shipmates with a man who belonged to an old riverside family of seafaring men. He was well versed in folklore and traditions of the sea. Many of his forefathers had sailed in the famous Blackwall liners and London

clippers. The East India Company ships had been the training-ground of the male portion of his family for generations. He had inherited from his ancestors much of their old-time superstition and imagination, for he told me in all seriousness that the lower reaches of the Thames Estuary were haunted by the souls of dead and disappointed homeward-bound sailormen. To substantiate his story he told me of a strange visitation from the spirit world. It happened that while homeward-bound in the *City of Agra* a few years before, with a cargo of wool from Melbourne, three men had been lost overboard off the Horn. The tragedy was caused by the breaking of a main top-gallant yard parrel, a not unusual occurrence if the sail is permitted to flap and dash about as it will if not spilled or clewed up correctly. Of course, as I pointed out to my friend when I heard his story, three men cannot very well vanish so suddenly from a ship, already short-handed, being driven through mountainous seas by men anxious to make a rapid passage, without being missed by their shipmates, whose thoughts would naturally go out to them in deep sympathy as the ship neared its destination.

However this man seemed to be very much in earnest when he said that while keeping anchor watch on the night of their arrival in the Thames, he had seen his lost shipmates seated on the main hatchway discussing what they would do when the ship docked in London on the morning tide. From that day he solemnly vowed and declared that if it so happened again that he be in a homeward-bound ship that was forced to anchor in close proximity to the Thames Estuary, he would flatly refuse to keep the anchor watch during the hours of graveyard wanderings.

While on the subject of deep-water superstitions, it may interest my reader to hear another story generally believed by men of the period of which I write to be authentic. This one concerns a seabird, the Sooty Albatross (*Phoebetria fuliginosa*).

This beautiful bird is often seen on the wing, sailing majestically into the hollows of a cross sea. Sometimes I have held my breath in wonder, thinking the dark beauty would be overwhelmed by the white caps of the great waves, but no; up he sails as if challenging his fellows—the Royal Albatross (*Diomedea regia*), the Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchus*) or Giant Fulmars, and hundreds of Cape Pigeons (*Daption capensis*), which accompany the ships on their journeys. This particular bird is also known to sailors as a Booby. One feature about it is that other seabirds seem to shun its presence. The sailor accounts for this by saying that the souls of dead deep-water men have taken possession of these birds, and the other members of the feathered tribes know it. Hence their isolation. The bird is also known to whalers as a Stinker. From certain old whalers I gathered that at certain periods it exhales an obnoxious odour. To the writer's mind, this is a more natural reason why other denizens of the air shun its presence.

I smiled to myself as the thought of these superstitions crossed my mind. To certain men of that time and former generations who followed the sea, such yarns were truths, as is the story of the Garden of Eden to adherents of the Christian Faith.

The mate appeared on deck a few minutes after three o'clock. I was surprised to see him and was foolish enough to suppose that perhaps he was uneasy concern-

ing the faithfulness of the watch. I quickly realised the injustice of those thoughts by the cheery manner of his greeting and the offer of a fine cigar.

"Good morning, Mr. Hedger," said he, stepping in beside me as I paced slowly fore and aft on the quarter-deck. "I think we are in for some finer weather."

"Yes," I answered. "It is welcome, for we have quite a lot of work before us which needs a few fine days to accomplish."

"That is what I would like to talk about," said he, as he puffed away at his cigar. "During the morning a lighter will come alongside with a load of stores and gear. I want you, sir, to supervise operations."

We tramped in silence. Although I was almost beside myself in anticipation I took good care to ask no questions. I did not wish to offend this dear old man by word or deed as I supposed I had offended the second mate the previous evening. He handed me a bunch of keys, detailing each one; also a few sheets of paper containing directions for the use of stores, and the rigging of the *Anna Lombard*. Then he said:

"At 8 o'clock the Richesters and I set out on a short holiday. We propose to be away for about ten days. During that time you will have a fine opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the ship, the petty officers and the crew, who will receive instructions to assist you to dress ship."

We discussed details of the work until eight bells (4 o'clock). The watch being relieved, I went below for a few hours' sleep, determined to carry out the task imposed upon me to the very letter.

That morning work commenced in earnest. The weather continued to improve and the sun put in an ap-

pearance as the morning advanced, and when the "after guard" had taken their departure for London by a shore launch, I held a conference with Joe Splendid and the carpenter. The lighter—or dumb barge—came alongside, and a derrick was made by cock-billing the mainyard which enabled us to hoist on board all the heavy gear. The task was completed by nightfall, when Steve Finlay called me into the engine-house to inspect the machinery of which he spoke in terms of great admiration. The boiler and steam compressor was a compact arrangement of great power, situated as I said before, in the after end of the fore deck-house. Ropes could be led from all parts of the deck to the drums of the steam winch which also served as driving gear for the windlass under the fore-castle head. A number of steam-pipes penetrated the forward bulkhead of the engine-room, which was all I ever saw of the refining plant.

That evening Kong and I dined alone. I found him quite an entertaining companion, for he told me many things concerning the *Anna Lombard*, but not one word could I gather concerning the coming voyage. My mind dwelt upon the splendid appointments, the many labour-saving devices and the superiority of the stores that we had taken on board, all of which proved that no expense had been spared in refitting the ship. These things also forced upon me the full significance of my responsibilities.

After dinner, while I was smoking my pipe on deck, Joe Splendid joined me, and we talked over the next day's work. So far, all the seamen were Britishers. Two of them were ex-naval men who had been recommended by a naval friend of Peter Haskell, on account



of their previous training. I, for one, thought they were somewhat out of place in a whaler, but I subsequently learned that they were expert boatbuilders from a naval dockyard, and proved themselves a great asset to our expedition.

During the evening a steam launch came alongside with Captain Lombard and several seamen, and while the boatswain assisted them to hoist their kits and chests on board, I followed the Captain to his cabin.

Our chat that evening over a glass of grog was more like a friendly exposition of the theory of seamanship as applied to the dressing of the *Anna Lombard's* masts, ready for the voyage. I shall not weary the reader with details, because, in my opinion, the Captain was simply testing my knowledge, satisfying himself that he could rely upon my carrying out the work to his satisfaction. As he bade me goodnight, he added:

"Mr. Hedger, you will be in full charge until next Monday. On that day I will return. I rely upon you to see that everything is done as it should be."

It was my chance to prove myself worthy of this man's confidence. Was ever a young sailorman placed in a more fortunate position? I often smiled, as I glanced through my diary in after years, at the proud, almost egotistical entries made on that occasion, and the wonderful air of self-importance I assumed as I went the rounds of the ship to satisfy myself that all was well before seeking my room and my bed until called to stand anchor watch.

In a burst of warm sunshine, the month of April announced its appearance and we swayed aloft our three top-gallant masts simultaneously, for the gantlines were stretched along the decks to the steam-winch, and as

Captain Lombard went down the gangway into the launch, he cocked his eye aloft, smiling satisfactorily as I yelled: "High enough! Belay all!" which was the signal to men in the cross-trees to drive home the fid (the fid is a square block of hard wood or a bar of iron, thrust through a hole in the heel of the mast, which settles down upon the trestle-trees, a masthead fitting no longer used in these days when masts are built of steel plates). Then followed the setting up of fore and aft, and back stays, which, under the supervision of the boatswain, was not a very long process.

During the afternoon the rising tide saw a great influx of shipping. For many weeks the Downs had been sheltering a large number of ships that had been delayed by the weather. Many well-known clippers were towed Londonwards. One could feel the excitement that prevailed amongst their crews, especially in such ships as the *Thermopylae* and the *Cutty Sark*, for it was the occasion of one of their historic ocean races with cargoes from the Antipodes.

We paused in our labours to give them a cheer, and speculation ran high as to which craft would dock first. Then came the pretty little *Agnes Oswald* from some west American port, followed by the lumbering old *Ben Laragg*.

Oh, those never-to-be-forgotten days, so dear to the heart of a deep-water man, when the lower reaches of the Thames were chock-a-block with famous ships; those transition days, before steam became so universal and finally took away our jobs; for many of us "latter-day saints" could not bring ourselves to seek work on dirty steamboats.

Close astern of us lay the stately *Norman Court*.

Her captain, taking advantage of every slant of wind, had worked his ship right up channel, in spite of the east and north-easterly gales. Her anchor was being lifted now for the last time. Escorted by the well-known tug *Sarah Folliff* she would dock on the top of high water. Shanty after shanty rang from her decks. Round and round went her capstan. "I'll spend my money on Sally Brown" chorused the crew to the chant of the shantyman. Then from a ship some little distance ahead came "Ranso Boys, Ranso."

A fine picture was a large four-masted square-rigged ship, towed by two tugs, being overtaken by the famous London tug *Storm King* towing the barque *Laira*. What a harvest the London pimps and harpies made that year on the hard-earned wages of the simple-minded merchant sailor; for scores of homeward-bounders were towed through the anchorage where lay the *Anna Lombard* during the period of her refitting.

I often wonder if the lower reaches of Old Father Thames still witness such scenes of activity and hear the singing of those famous songs and shanties. Now that I have reached the afternoon watches of life and live under the sunny skies of the Antipodes, I often live again those stirring times when the sailing-ship sailor was at his best. I imagine I can hear the sharp cracking of stretching ropes and fast-travelling sheaves, the clang of the capstan-paul and the jig-jog of the windlass levers, and in my dreams I seem to hear "Blow the man down" and other once-familiar shanties, and I have nursed my children and hushed my grandchildren with that charming lullaby: "Blow ye winds, hi oh, and a roaming we will go," or "Blow boys, blow." One charming young lady beside me sings "Blow my bully

boys, blow," and tears moisten my spectacles and my heart breathes a prayer for the souls of those hard old men—my instructors in the art of seamanship.

Day after day the work progressed. The crossing of yards, the bending of sails, and the reaving of running gear with the fixing of chafing gear, gave us plenty to think about. The sailmaker was kept busy repairing here and there, and Joe Splendid was in his glory, for he was a boatswain of the old school, using his "pipe" whenever possible. Each stretch of daylight told its own tale of progress and by the time Captain Lombard returned, the job was well-nigh complete.

As I have stated, the *Anna Lombard* was ship-rigged; that is, she was square rigged on all three masts—double top-gallant sails on the fore and main masts, single on the mizzen mast. She carried three sets of derrick-like davits on each side on which were hoisted five whale-boats. The davits on the port quarter held a fine powerful steam-launch. A fore and aft bridge from the 75-ft. poop deck, gave access to the 25-ft. fore-castle. By the time she was ready for sea—the yards squared with sails aloft, each gasket passed and tucked correctly, running gear taut and coiled down ready for action—no finer picture could be imagined, and when Peter Haskell stepped on board, one bright afternoon in late April, he gazed aloft with the eye of a critic, and was most demonstrative in his congratulations, for which I was very grateful.

The next day was signing-on day, and all hands were to go ashore to the shipping office in Gravesend to sign articles. This was quite a ceremony in those days. So it happened that once more I found myself in the old town which for generations has been known to London

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sailors as "Shrimpy" town. The Three Daws Hotel just beyond the landing-stage claimed the attention of our men. I warned them that should any of them appear at the Board of Trade office the worse for drink, Captain Lombard might refuse to sign them on.

"Aye, aye, Mr. Mate," said one fellow, speaking for all concerned, "we know a good ship when we see one. We'll have just one pint in the old Three Daws; one pint in the Commercial; another in the Barley Mow; a glass in the Coach and Horses; another. . . ."

I did not stop to take further count, but slowly walked to the shipping office, wondering what would happen to the deep-sea sailor should beer vanish from the earth.

## CHAPTER V

### OUTWARD BOUND

AT the shipping office Captain Lombard requested me to seek from the waiting crowd of unemployed seamen two men to complete our complement. I posted a notice to that effect on a board set up for that purpose in the waiting-room, and was soon surrounded by a mob of sailors and longshoremen, representing almost every nation on earth, for the fame of the *Anna Lombard* had spread far and wide. She was called a mystery ship, as certain facts concerning her equipment had appeared in the local press, but no word of her mission had leaked out. A statement had been published that she would clear for the Argentine Capital, where it was conjectured she would be converted into a training-ship.

One man approached me with a handful of discharges covering many years spent in sailing-ships. He had a sad look in his eyes, and seemed as though he had but recently recovered from a long illness. On closer inspection of his papers, I found that he had been a member of an Arctic expedition, hunting Right and Greenland whales. I sent him into the office to interview Captain Lombard. His name was George Barns, a Greenwich man.

Then a short thick-set fellow of the Maltese type of Greek pushed his papers in front of me. On them

I saw the name of a famous whaling-ship, and the signature of a captain of whom my late commander had often spoken in terms of warm admiration. I ascertained that this man had been for many years employed on English and American sailing-ships, and he struck me as being a unique personage. He was forty years of age, although his dark skin and short stature made him look much older. He wore large gold earrings, and had several gold teeth which flashed as he spoke—not the pigeon English of Maltese ports, but the English of common sailortown of every port in the British Empire.

“Where do you belong?” I inquired with an air of importance, wondering whether I had guessed correctly his nationality.

“I belong to Greenock,” he returned blandly.

I glanced at his latest discharge and saw that Valetta on the island of Malta was indeed his birthplace. I looked sharply at him and said with a laugh:

“How long have you lived at Greenock?”

It was no unusual thing for a man of his type to marry, and wherever his family resided he claimed that place as his home, which in a way was quite correct and in order. But a loud laugh rose from the assembled crowd as the Maltese-Scotsman said:

“I—I—er—I ain’t—what you call ’em—bin dere yet. I go dere next time.”

That was a standing joke for many a long day, but it was typical of a sailor’s desire to settle in some place of his fancy, and I suppose Greenock was this man’s idea of paradise. We engaged him, and a great asset to our crowd did he subsequently prove himself. His gold teeth and earrings caused him to be dubbed “The

Pirate," and by that name he was always known to the crew of the *Anna Lombard*.

As we were not sailing until the afternoon of the next day, the Captain requested all hands to be on board not later than noon. I obtained permission to spend just one more night in London. I was glad indeed of the few hours of liberty, for goodness only knows when my feet would tread again the streets of the Empire City. To me there is only one London. Be the world ever so beautiful, the splendours of foreign cities ever so charming, one is apt to grow weary of the grandest. But of London, that great city which never changes; dear old dirty London, the magnetic city of the world, towards which every intelligent human eye is turned, one never tires. Always it had a great attraction for me. It was on its river bank that I first saw the light of day, and the dirty shingle beach before the old town of Greenwich was my childhood's playground. The ships that passed day and night were all wondrous craft sailing to and from the land of my dreams.

I returned to Gravesend by a midday train and made for the town landing-stage, thinking perhaps I had missed the launch engaged to convey the crew to the ship. The ship-chandler's launch was at the steps, but there were no signs of the crew of the *Anna Lombard*. The skipper of the boat informed me that several times the crew had appeared on the jetty only to return to the town. They all refused to enter the launch while one of their number possessed the price of a drink. Much amusement had been caused by several of the Lombardians (as they were called by the longshoremen and loafers of the waterfront) turning out their pockets in search of a stray coin. When sufficient had been



discovered, an argument would follow as to who should have the honour of consuming the last pint of beer, and much precious time was lost in casting lots for that privilege. Then off again to the pub all hands would go, leaving kit-bags and sea-chests to the mercy of jetty loungers, to witness the ceremony of drowning poverty by proxy. That was an ancient custom, one little heard of even in those days. It was a survival of mediæval times, when the sending of a ship to sea was marked with more attention than in modern times. There is no feasting, no jollification, no broaching of a special brew to drink *bon voyage*; no gathering of lads and lasses on the village-green—indeed there is no village-green—but there are men and women in our midst who would deny the voyaging sailorman his last glass of beer.

Like most customs and traditions connected with the sea, each generation seems to introduce a new interpretation. During the mid-Victorian period we find a peculiar superstition among men before the mast, who believed that it was most unlucky to take coin of the realm to sea. Of course, there are many reasons for this strange idea. For instance, there is the desire of the crimp and the harpy to fleece poor Jack of his last stray coin. Then again, there is his own unquenchable appetite for strong drink, a thirst much stronger than any he may have known on the high seas.

One man tried to describe to me this desire and craving for strong drink, by telling me that once he was shipwrecked, and exposed to all the horrors of an open boat voyage of nearly 1,000 miles under a tropical sun, with only a few pints of water for nine people. His craving for drink during that period of hardship, when

they approached the borders of cannibalism, was not to be compared with the undying craving for strong drink while ashore. Of course, there are others whom it does not affect in the same way.

The fortunate man in this instance, whose privilege it was to imbibe, was a well set up, spick and span young Londoner. His splendid build and clean appearance proclaimed him to be a smart seaman. His name was George Stockley, formerly in the Hudson Bay Company ships. He strode away to the bar, his shipmates at his heels loudly arguing, each trying to impress upon the other that that last pint of beer was by right, "his'n." I followed at a distance, knowing full well the hopelessness of protesting against the delay in embarking.

As the lucky one began to drink, his mates commenced to sing, to the accompaniment of concertinas, that well-known outward-bound shanty:

*Blow ye winds, hi oh,  
A roaming we will go,  
For soon we'll leave old England's shore  
So let the music play.  
We're off by the morning's tide, my boys,  
Across the ocean wide.  
We're bound to the south in a Composite ship  
Ten thousand miles away.*

The men danced and capered on the pavement, oblivious to the moving world around them and the waiting steam-launch at the jetty. Verse after verse was rattled off, to the amusement of the bystanders, while the lucky man at the bar sipped his beer with the air of

a grand duke sipping wine. Then the landlord of the Three Daws called all hands to drink at his expense, and there was a general stampede for the bar.

They were a merry crowd as they marched down the main street a little while after, to the tune of the "Little powder monkey," an old sea song that had many times since the French wars disturbed the fresh shrimpy atmosphere of Gravesend. An old time jetty lounge, seated on a fish-basket, said as the sea-chests and kit-bags were placed on the launch:

"Aye, Mr. Mate, that takes me back to the good old days. Before the dirty steamboats drove the deep-water man to the London Docks, Gravesend was the place of departure for many a good sailing-ship. A waterman could earn a tidy penny them days—but now—why—no one wants a wherry!"

There was plenty of good-tempered banter and laughter. The men had taken just enough Gravesend beer to make them merry, and as the last kit-bag was handed into the launch, down the jetty staggered the last two heroes, arm-in-arm, each carrying a large canvas bag, and kicking before them, like gigantic foot-balls, a donkey's breakfast; singing as they gave each kick, "All on the Plains of Mexico."

I should explain that a "donkey's breakfast" is a sailor's bed or mattress. It is generally made of some tenth-rate jute sacking about 6 feet long by 2 feet wide, into which straw or hay is stuffed. Then the end is sewn up, and there you are, you have a sailor's bed. Every ship chandler sold them in those days. I might state, gentle reader, that the straw or hay may have circumnavigated the globe many times in various packing-cases. Sailors in my day did not appreciate

feathers. These famous beds could be purchased for sums varying from a few shillings to as many pounds sterling, according to the magnitude of the buyer's purse and his degree of soberness.

When the two latecomers kicked their beds on board with a simultaneous effort, a great cheer arose from the others. One of the beds struck the portly skipper fair in the middle and sent him stumbling into the cockpit. When he had recovered sufficient dignity to speak, he shouted vehemently:

"Let go the —— shore lines!" and away we went, all hands singing another well-known outward-bound shanty, "We're bound for Rio Grande!" As the concertinas played the verses, someone ventured to sing, but it was the chorus, lustily sung by everyone, which caused many heads to be turned in our direction. It was the "Good-bye, fare you well" termination of the refrain which seemed so very appropriate. Even the good-tempered skipper of the launch joined in the chant as he steered his boat under the stern of the *Anna Lombard*.

As I climbed the gangway and reported to Captain Lombard, the river pilot shouted, "Heave away forward, sir!" We were off at last. The messenger-chain rattled the anchor cable into the locker without a man turning so much as a hair. On all other ships in which I had served, the weighing of the anchor had been a slave's task. The jig-jog of windlass levers, or an endless walk round a capstan, accompanied by the moaning wail of some gruff-voiced shantyman was a horrible proceeding, but here, a splutter of steam, the whirl of a chain, a shout from the mate on the fore-castle head, and the tug surged ahead. The anchor

was away and when the ship's head was turned towards the Nore, I was instructed to take the wheel. Thus commenced the voyage of the *Anna Lombard*.

The mate and the boatswain roused out of the fore-castle as many men as could be gathered, to fish and cat the anchor ready for letting go in the Downs. The gangway was hoisted up and lashed level with the taff-rail, while the after-quarter boat, a large steam launch enclosed in a canvas cover, was swung out-board, and the falls arranged for lowering.

I was greatly charmed with the way in which old Peter Haskell handled the men. He seemed to have a way entirely his own of getting every ounce of labour, without any unnecessary shouting or confusion, as is often the case in an outward-bound ship.

The boatswain was in good form, for he used his pipe wherever possible. All hands seemed to enter into the spirit of the work. I could see Captain Lombard's eyes sparkle with satisfaction as he calmly looked on. It was difficult to realise that but a few hours before these men had been drinking and carousing with beer-seeking longshoremen and fishermen. The pilot remarked casually as he gave me the course for the North Foreland:

"I think, Mr. Mate, you must have cleaned the Port o' London of its best seamen. A team to be proud of."

I quite agreed with him, for I had every reason, during the time spent in dressing ship, to know that our crew were indeed the pick of the Port, as far as the knowledge of seamanship was concerned.

It was a beautiful afternoon, and we left the anchorage just on the top of high water, joining the long procession of outward-bound ships, both sail and steam,

which had for so many weeks been weatherbound. The fine four-masted full-rigged ship *Falls of Afton*, in charge of two tugs, surged ahead. Her crew were busy aloft, for she was going down Channel in charge of her steamers. As a fine south-east breeze was in evidence, she would not anchor in the Downs. No doubt she would retain one tug-boat as far as St. Catherines, or perhaps St. Alban's Head, and if the weather held, get clear of the Channel in a very few days.

Far up the river we could see a large number of clippers being towed to sea. It was, indeed, a period of harvest for tug-boat owners. As the pilot remarked, every anchorage was full of weatherbound ships. A tug worth its salt was worth its weight in gold to its owners. I realised that the towing fees then within sight would make a fine little nest-egg and provide me, a modest sailorman, with a comfortable pittance for the rest of my days.

I shall never forget that April afternoon as we followed the famous tug *Monarch*. There were ships everywhere. Far ahead on the skyline some were steering north-east, some south-east, and, of course, there was the familiar river-barge with all sail aloft. (Father on the fore-deck, mother at the wheel.) One great sailing barge with brass deck fittings and gaudily painted top-works and cabin-hatch, came close up under our stern, tacking across to the Mouse Channel. The good lady at the wheel, before throwing over the helm, waved her hand to me, shouting "*Bon voyage.*" Then she dexterously cast off the main-sheet, while hubby attended to jib and foresail. Round came the graceful barge, almost on an even keel, and sped away on another

tack to the Essex shore, under the guidance of its fair helmswoman.

The pilot in a jocular mood asked the Captain if he had heard the story of the London bargee who taught his wife to steer with the aid of a bucket and broom. What sailor from the Port o' London had not?

Briefly, it is this: A certain bargee's wife could not understand the terms "Hard-a-port" and "Hard-a-star-board," so the good man placed a bucket on one side of the ship and a broom on the other. All went well, until nearing Blackwall Reach, when poor hubby became confused, and shouted: "Hard-a-port, yer lubber!" for a whole string of coal barges towed by a fussy tug-boat was coming down on top of them, and disaster seemed inevitable.

"Hard-a-port, I tell yer, Sal!" shouted the bargee.

The poor lady, confused with the helm amidships, said, somewhat puzzled: "Which way, dear?"

"Oh, 'ell!" said her husband as he disappeared over the side, for the barge had run on a mud-bank, the violence of the impact sending the dear man overboard, and as wife assisted her beloved from the dirty muddy water, she explained:

"I thought you said both bucket and broom. Really, dear, it is your own fault for using such terrible language!"

The Kentish fleet of shrimping boats made a fine picture on our starboard hand as they sped across our course like a flock of small sea-birds. There were hundreds of them, each with their tiny coppers or boilers going, evidently cooking their previous catch. Their

trawls were out, scooping in the fish as they sailed across the Princes' Channel.

Rounding the North Foreland, the shoreline looked green and enchanting, with the freshness of spring. The lighthouse on the headland shone like a silver monument in the sunlight. In a short time we seemed to speed by Broadstairs with almost unwarranted rapidity. I found myself gazing at the high terraces of Ramsgate regretfully.

The pilot, conning the ship through the shoaly water of the Goodwin Channel, tried to engage the Captain in conversation concerning the ship.

"Fine craft, Captain Lombard," said he, "fine ship. I remember the old girl twenty-five years ago, when she rode out a blizzard to the east of Dungeness. There were three ships driven on shore that night and the lifeboats were busy on the Goodwins. This ship dragged her starboard anchor and the chain snapped. But the port hook found a hold which saved her. She was flying the French flag then, if I remember rightly."

The old sailor glanced sideways at the skipper expectantly, but Captain Lombard answered:

"Yes, sir, she is indeed a fine ship; but that is all I am at liberty to say about her." Then he entered the charthouse, leaving the pilot in charge of the deck.

The coastline fell away as we opened Pegwell Bay, and the green fields in the distance, dotted with tiny cottages, resembled a picture of some fairy garden. Sandwich Flats, from Shellness Point to the town of Deal, fronted by a stretch of golden beach, called to mind tropical islands. Then when the Gull stream lightship passed astern, the pilot shouted:

"Stand by the anchor, sir!"



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"Aye, aye," answered the mate as the great tow-rope slackened. Then we came to an anchor between Deal and Walmer in seven fathoms of water, just as the sun approached the western horizon and the lights of the various sand-bars commenced their nocturnal twinkling.

The tug drew alongside, and together with the pilot and Captain Lombard her captain disappeared below. I could hear the popping of corks, and I realised the nature of the ceremony being performed below. I coiled up ropes under the mizzen rigging, surveying the famous tug, and wondering what adventures lay in store for me ere I should see that steamer again. As I cast off her after-line and waved my hand to her cheery captain, I thought that she would soon obtain another "tow" back to the old smoky city, for in the roadstead of Dungeness there were many ships waiting escort Londonwards. My surmise was quite correct, for at daybreak next morning, I saw her returning with a deeply-laden, four-masted barque—a lame duck. Her main top-gallant and royal masts and yards were hanging from aloft, secured to the backstays, while her crew were engaged in dismantling portions of the wreckage wrought by the late storm. We gave her a cheer as she passed by. The distance was too great for us to distinguish her name, but I subsequently discovered that she was one of the "Dales" out of Glasgow. She had made a very long passage from the west coast of America, being posted at Lloyd's as missing.

## CHAPTER VI

ALL IN THE DOWNS THE FLEET LAY MOORED

IT was a beautiful evening! The light of the full moon cast a spell over the earth! The sight of so much sparkling beauty caused me to linger on the quarterdeck for an after-dinner smoke, in spite of the fact that a cold raw wind came out of the east.

That famous anchorage before the towns of the Kentish Coast called the Downs was full of shipping. There must have been hundreds of craft lying at anchor. The sight was magnificent—the flashing lights of the numerous sand-bars, lightships, and riding lights of the anchored ships.

A tiny barque under all sail stole across the moon's path like a silver ship. A liner ablaze with a thousand lights sped up the Channel, and behind her came a lumbering old tramp. Thud, thud, thud, beat her screw, and her huge tank-like sides seemed black and dismal in the pale moonlight. The propeller being only half submerged, sent up wreaths of sparkling foam which flashed brilliantly as the moonbeams fell upon them. Fishing boats and Kentish cobbles flashed by; then came a tug towing an old wooden barque with fore and main topsails hanging in the clew-lines. The faint outline of her crew, busy aloft, could be distinguished as she crossed the silver stream and, wafted towards us on the evening breezes, came the noise of her pumps and the

clamour of her working windmill. Clamp, clamp, clamp, for just a few minutes, then all was silent, she passed away—a ghost ship.

A three-masted topsail schooner, beating across the Goodwin Channel, claimed my attention. Would she weather the lightship? Yes.

A billy-boy ketch lumbered along, then vanished. Then came another liner, a great four-masted, smoke-vomiting thing which looked like a floating hotel. Dancing was in progress, for as she approached I could see people moving about her upper decks in the glare of many electric lights, and the strains of music smote my ears. Just a few bars of a popular waltz, "Over the Waves." Then she vanished into the gloom. Her passing was announced by the rattle of an anchor chain, and turning, I saw that another ship had moored close under our quarter.

The mate came out of the cabin and for a moment gazed into the starry sky, his face aglow with admiration at the glorious picture. He seemed to be meditating upon the solemn grandeur. I was loath to break the silence, and leaned against the taff-rail drawing great clouds of smoke from my pipe, and wondering why he gazed so fixedly into the Milky Way. Presently he changed his position slightly, and the full light of the moon fell upon his fine old face, causing his snow-white hair to sparkle like silver. His countenance lit up with a spiritual light and his lips moved as in silent prayer. In my ignorance, I attributed this to signs of old age. After standing thus for fully fifteen minutes, he came to my side, and said:

"Thank you, Mr. Hedger; you were good enough not to disturb me in my worship."

So many unusual things had happened during my short experience on board that strange ship. I had become a silent observer of quite a number of unconventional happenings. This last strange occurrence—when an apparently sane person stands gazing into the sky for fully a quarter of an hour, silently ignoring my presence—did at first seem very uncanny. A cold shiver ran down my back as I wondered if Peter Haskell was in his right senses.

"You may think it strange," he continued, lighting a cigar, "but I love to gaze at those beautiful planets, every one of which is known to me by name. It is thus that I glorify the Creator. On such nights as these I feel very much in tune with the divinity."

How to answer him I did not know. What I did realise was my own ignorance of such things. But when I reflect upon the discrepancy in our ages, and my own lack of education and also my lack of understanding of the line of study to which he had devoted so many years, I do not wonder that my thoughts would persist in dwelling on his saneness.

"Some day," said he, "your eyes will be opened to the magnificence of the heavens. Then you too will see the planets in all their glory and beauty. If you are interested, you will find many important works on the subject in my bookcase, to which you are welcome."

"Thank you, sir," I remarked, as we commenced a series of deck-tramps which I was destined to remember all the days of my life.

"We shall remain here for a day or so," said the mate, after a while, "for we take on board 200 tons of coal and some machinery which is coming from Hamburg. Also, we shall put the crew through some drill.

I, for one, do not care to go to sea with a strange crew who know little or nothing about the ship."

"Yet it is done every day," I said seriously.

"Yes, Mr. Hedger," he replied kindly, "but in this instance it is not a question of £ s. d. We are not limited to time. Furthermore, to carry out the purpose of our voyage, strict discipline is necessary. Captain Lombard, having obtained what he considers the pick of London in the way of seamen, will try them out before leaving the Downs. If any man is not considered worthy, he will be discharged, and another found in his place."

"I don't think we shall experience any trouble in that direction," I said. "The men I had to assist me in the dressing of the ship are, every one, sailors. If there are any duds, they may be found amongst the new arrivals."

"What you say is correct," Haskell answered, "but we are an old-fashioned crowd in the afterguard, and the work on this ship will be conducted on old-fashioned lines, so to-morrow we shall commence our drill."

"The Downs were once famous drilling grounds, were they not, Mr. Haskell?" I questioned, now full of curiosity as to possible coming events.

"Yes," he answered pleasantly, as his eyes lingered for a while on the coastline. Then he turned and looked up Channel to where the glare of the great South Foreland light pierced the distant blackness like the beam of a searchlight, mingling ever and anon with the light of the South Sandhead.

"Yes," he continued after a pause, evidently in a reminiscent mood, "it was in this famous roadstead

that outward-bound ships of forty years ago anchored before venturing into deep water. Many a sailor has recovered from a drunken stupor and found himself on some hard-case ship which in sober moments he would have shunned. A few days of spar and sail drill would soon whip the most dilatory crowd into shape. Then, with the coming of a fair wind, such a cloud of canvas would make a dash for the open sea as is never dreamed of in these days of speedy steamships. Those days will never return, sir," said he regretfully. "No more will we see ships competing in feats of seamanship. The sending down of top-hamper was something to behold. I have seen East Indiamen, Blackwall ships, London clippers, and scores of others, all competing for the honour of swaying aloft or sending down skysails and royals in the shortest time. For a great number of years, as old Deal boatmen will tell you, the honours always fell to the *Newcastle*, one of the last East India Company ships. Whenever that craft lay at anchor in the Downs, officers of other ships closely watched her performances, for she was stately and lofty in her rig, at one time flying three skysail yards, with moonrakers above. In those old days, she was the talk of the Port of London. Her crew were considered the smartest lot of men that ever filled the forecastle of a merchant ship, and I might tell you, Mr. Hedger, that service in the old *Newcastle* was sufficient recommendation for any sailorman seeking a ship. There was scarcely a deep-water captain who did not strive to obtain at least one member of her crew. Skippers drilled their crews to wrench the honours from the captain of the old East Indiaman. The Deal and Walmer boatmen made quite a lot of money conveying shore people

out to the fleet to witness the sight during the summer months."

He paused for a moment to gaze at a number of brown sail fishing-boats, then continued:

"The honours were taken from the *Newcastle* in a strange way. I forget the year exactly, but I do know that the man from whom I heard the following story was boatswain of the ship that sprang the joke upon the captain of the *Newcastle*. It was the *Nightingale*, the craft which made a record passage from Shanghai to Deal in 1851. To use the old boatswain's words: 'She sneaked into the roadstead late at night in charge of a Channel pilot, an old chap' of some seventy years, by the name of Mussel. She dropped anchor under the stern of the *Newcastle*. At dawn all hands were mustered aft, and the skipper promised his well-drilled crew the sum of one guinea per man in addition to wages if the top-hamper was housed in quicker time than the *Newcastle*. Officers were posted in various parts of the ship with watches, waiting for the signal from the East Indiaman. Presently the pipes rang out, vibrating through the fleet like steam whistles. Yardmen and topmen dashed aloft like monkeys. Yards were canted, the skysail and royal yards were stowed in the tops—man-o'-war style. Fids were struck out and down came the masts, to the shrill cries of boatswain and mates. Flying jib-booms, and jib-booms, were taken in: everything secured ready for docking, and when the crew fell in on the quarterdeck the captain of the *Nightingale* had ten minutes to spare. The time signals were hoisted, and the skipper of the *Newcastle* took breakfast on board the *Nightingale*, and as she sailed through the fleet on her way to London, cheer upon cheer rang

from the crews of anchored ships, for her feat was remarkable.' "

Such stories always fired my enthusiasm for my profession, and when a tramp steamer crossed the moonlit waters, my soul rose in rebellion at the thoughts of the ugly tanks—misnamed ships—which were gradually but surely displacing the stately and beautiful sailing-ships. The dear old sea-father beside me was speaking again, and I was a good listener, for I enjoyed every word that came from his lips. I simply revelled in his company, and it wanted another hour yet to eight bells.

"This fleet of ships," said he, glancing at the numerous anchor lights, "is the largest I have seen in the Downs since 1856. I was then making a voyage as a ship's office in the *Oriel* homeward bound from Canton. The morning of our arrival—almost on this very spot—there were some one hundred and forty ships windbound."

"I was once shipmates with a man who was in the *Oriel* about that time, Mr. Haskell," I interrupted eagerly. "He told me that some Chinese pirates shot away her main royal mast. Is that correct, sir?"

"Yes," he replied with a smile. "Do you remember his name?"

"Yes, sir," I returned, "his name was Jackson, and a very smart old seaman he was."

"I remember him," said the mate. "He was foretopman of the starboard watch. If he is living he will be close on eighty now."

"Two years ago he joined the *B*——, having signed on in Capetown in place of a man whom we lost by the overturning of a whaleboat," I said.

The conversation lagged for a while, and we paused



in our walk to watch a large four-masted ship being towed through the roadstead. She made a fine picture in the moonlight. So vast was her running gear that she seemed to be enveloped in a perfect network of ropes.

"One of the new class of ship, built as a forlorn hope in the futile competition against steam," said Mr. Haskell, and when we resumed our walk he continued his story of the *Oriel*.

"That was the longest voyage the *Oriel* ever made, one hundred and fifty-four days from Canton river. Perhaps the incident may interest you—that is, if your former shipmate Jackson has not already given you details."

"Jackson's memory was not a good one," I returned lightly. "Like most old seamen, the stories of his many experiences were not sufficiently coherent to convey word pictures of any great magnitude. Indeed, we called him 'Cuffer Bill,' and I don't suppose anyone in the *B*—— took him seriously."

"Well, first I must tell you that the *Oriel* carried a crew of eighty men, every one of whom was necessary to handle her vast spread of canvas. We left Canton a full ship, and everything went well as we sailed down the China sea homeward bound for London. But when we reached somewhere about the fifth degree south of the line we encountered calms and variables. We simply drifted through the Carinata Channel, narrowly escaping the many reefs and shoals to the south of Borneo, and into the Java sea. But as we neared the Straits of Sunda a fine six-knot breeze sprang up from the north and we had hopes of getting through into the Indian Ocean without being molested by any of the

pirates that infested those waters. That same year two ships had been attacked by pirate junks, but an English cruiser had chased them off the coast. We carried a valuable cargo of tea and silks; also several passengers, including some ladies, so you may guess we were not looking for trouble. During the middle watch the wind died away, and before 4 o'clock there was a dead calm with a great head swell coming in from the Indian Ocean which showed signs of bringing up one of those hot fogs which are famous in that part of the world.

"Although all hands were kept on deck a strict silence was maintained and no lights were shown. As dawn broke, land rose high on the port bow. It was the north-east point of the island of Java with the high volcanic mountain in the background. A faint southeasterly wind stirred the leaches of the sails, which steadied the ship slightly but gave us little headway through the swell. The look-out man in the main cross-trees reported two craft inshore. We could not see them from the deck owing to the surface mist, but aloft, with the aid of a spy-glass, the sails of two large junks could be seen heading for the Straits. They were evidently using their long sweeps, for they seemed to be making considerable headway. The wind shifted to the north and east, then to the north and freshened slightly, dispersing the fog. Every stitch of canvas we could carry was piled on; studding sails aloft and below, royals and skysails. We must have looked a picture.

"The sun rose over the rolling water like a gigantic ball of fire, killing the breeze which had raised our hopes of reaching the open sea and clearing the Straits of

Sunda. Every particle of moisture in the atmosphere was dispelled by the heat of the sun and the headland appeared to be much closer, looking yellow and black, and footed by a wealth of dashing foam as the sea washed over the rocky base. The junks now appeared to be heading towards us, but our anxiety was somewhat relieved when, having gained sufficient offing from the land, they headed for the open straits and we wondered for which port or outlying island they were bound. We soon realised that this movement was simply a ruse to allay our suspicion of their real intention, also to gain advantage of the current which would drive them towards us at a considerable rate, before we gained the main channel of the Straits. We lay becalmed, perfectly helpless, with a huge cloud of canvas, but not a capful of wind came our way." Mr. Haskell paused to light another of his beloved cigars, for he was a great smoker, while I, deeply interested in the story, impatiently waited for him to continue.

"I must tell you, Mr. Hedger," he said, "that ships engaged in the Chinese trade in those days carried a gun mounted on a special platform which could be moved to either side of the deck. Our gun had been purchased from the British Admiralty some years before, when news reached the owners that ships had been attacked by Chinese pirates, but it had never been used. The necessary ammunition was stowed in one of the after berths of the saloon with a large number of small arms, but no previous occasion had called for their use.

"By the continued working of their long sweeps, the junks drifted closer to us, and when they changed their course it was very evident that they intended to lay on

board of us. By noon they were about a mile away, and not a breath of wind stirred the air. Not wishing to excite the suspicions of our lady passengers, all doors and hatches were quietly closed, and stewards were instructed to keep the passengers below, while preparations were made to receive the unwelcome visitors.

"As the afternoon drew on the heat of the sun became intense, causing the pitch in the deck-seams to run like black varnish. On came the wretched junks and we could see that each carried hundreds of men. They had long bamboo poles above the bulwarks, hanging from which were a number of earthenware pots. These were the terrible 'stinkpots' that had been used with such deadly effect by Hongkong pirates against the clipper ship *Stormbird* only a few months before. A consultation was held on the poop, to which the male passengers were invited. One passenger, named George Selkirk, volunteered to work our gun, with two of the crew as assistants. Selkirk was a retired Royal Naval master-gunner, and was returning to England. It was lucky for us he had selected to make the passage in the *Oriel*, for not one of us understood the working of 'Barking Billy,' as the gun was called. Short swords, cutlasses and pistols were served out, and I might tell you, Mr. Hedger," said Haskell with a laugh, "that we did look extremely grotesque and bloodthirsty as we examined our strange weapons. We were all scared even to touch them, but presently the noise of the grindstone reached us aft, and we knew that our men were determined to give John Chinaman a warm reception should he board us. About 3 o'clock a slight breeze came up from the north and the ship slowly gathered way, and an hour later a steady breeze sent

us towards the entrance of the Straits, reviving our hopes of escape.

"There was no doubt about the sailing powers of those junks. They seemed to skim over the water like ships bewitched. Presently we saw a cloud of smoke burst from the side of the leading junk, and the report of a shot rolled over the sea like a peal of thunder. The shot fell short. Then we noticed that the other junk sheered off a little, and let fly a shot at us, which went clean through our main topsail. Just then, we were almost hurled off our feet by a terrific explosion which caused the ship to vibrate and tremble as though she had struck a reef. Our newly appointed gunner had his weapon in action, and when the smoke cleared away, we found that our shot had crashed through the knight-heads of the leading junk, smashing in the timbers of the high forecastle, carrying mast and sail overboard, smothering many of her crew. Our men were so delighted that they danced about in high glee, waving their swords at the Chinamen, and exposing themselves to the small-arm fire of the screaming horde in the other junk, which now shot ahead of its consort within small-arm range.

"Both junks fired simultaneously, with the result that our main topmast came down, bringing with it its own top-hamper and the fore and mizzen top-gallant sails. This misfortune was followed by a shout of triumph from the junks, and excitement and fear ran high in the *Oriel*. In spite of the danger from small-arm fire, our men dashed aloft to clear away the wreckage. No one noticed our helmsman fall, pierced through the head by a Chinese sharp-shooter. The ship then fell away. We nearly fouled the crippled junk. It was only by a

very clever bit of seamanship that we avoided running her down. As we steered clear, we received a shower of their beastly 'stinkpots' which, being jerked on board by their bamboo rods, fell with a crash on the deck, and for a few minutes the atmosphere was blue with the vile fumes of their noxious gases. Fortunately, no one experienced their full power, or he would have been suffocated. A shot from our gun put this junk completely out of action, for the stern-post and rudder were shot clean away. Our other opponent made no effort to assist her fellow-countrymen, but she lay just out of range, frantically rigging a jury mast, using her long sweeps in an endeavour to catch us, for in our now crippled condition we made but little progress. We were in a terrible mess aloft. With the narrow Straits of Sunda to negotiate, and only about fifty minutes of daylight, with no moon, we made haste to securely lash the wreckage of the fallen top-hamper to the lower rigging, trusting that the breeze would freshen so that under cover of the darkness we might dodge the Chinamen and reach the open sea."

I saw the cabin door open, and was very much afraid I was going to miss the grand finale of this interesting story. It does not fall to the lot of many sailormen to hear an eyewitness's narrative of a sea fight, even though it had been enacted over thirty years before. I was in fear lest eight bells strike and we be interrupted. Presently the mate questioned thoughtfully:

"Have you ever heard of the *Macgillicutty* fake, Mr. Hedger?"

"No, sir," I answered, "I never have."

"Well, then," he continued, "I will tell you. Captain M'Fadden of the Glasgow ship *Macgillicutty* was at-

tacked off the coast of Formosa, away back in the early fifties, and during the night he lashed a lighted lantern to an empty keg which he lowered into the water. Then he doubled on his course. The captain of the *Oriel* went one better. He sacrificed one of his life-boats which had been already pierced by Chinese gun-fire. This he lowered under cover of the darkness, and its mast was stepped and jib hoisted, the tiller lashed in such a way that her head would be pointed towards the land so long as the wind held. At the mast-head was lashed a lighted lamp which resembled as near as possible the one exposed light of the *Oriel's* binnacle. We had already taken the bearings of the central channel, so with a fair wind and all lights out we sailed into the Indian Ocean, our abandoned boat acting as a decoy for the bloodthirsty pirates. When daylight came the land was far astern, but not a sign of the junks was visible. We realised that we owed our escape to the skill of our gunner, and when the long and tedious voyage was broken at Capetown, where we spent a few days to refit, our report of the encounter in the Java Sea was sent to the Admiral of the station, who saw that George Selkirk was suitably rewarded, and, as I have already remarked, whenever I see the Goodwin lights, and this portion of the coastline of Old England, my mind goes back to the day on which the *Oriel* terminated her famous voyage of one hundred and fifty-four days from Canton."

Captain Lombard and Mr. Richester came on deck as eight bells struck, and I went below. The mate's story had interested me greatly. But there was something about him I could not understand. As I before remarked, his English was perfect, too perfect for a

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sailor. He was not an Englishman, for there were certain twists in his articulation which convinced me that either Germany or Austria, perhaps Poland, was his birthplace. At any rate, thought I, whatever country claimed him as a native, he could tell a rattling good yarn, and I was proud to know him.

The story I had heard had gripped me with a desire to record it in my log-book, a very thick volume of clear lined paper which I had procured at considerable expense on my last flying visit to my home in Greenwich. In after years this book gave me much pleasure, for it enabled me to live again through episodes of adventure which do not fall to the lot of every man who goes down to the sea in ships.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE DEEP-SEA SCRAP-HEAP

THE Downs and the coastline between the North and South Forelands have witnessed many wonderful gatherings of shipping, from the coming of the Roman invaders to the assembling of Britain's merchant fleets; the period of transition from sail to steam, as a means of maritime propulsion—the decades of the eighties and nineties of the last century—witnessed each year a congregation of shipping which stirred the souls of Empire-loving Englishmen with emotions of pride and enthusiasm for their race. No assemblage of shipping was as magnificent and wonderful as that of the year 188—, when the famous roadstead was crowded with sailing craft of every conceivable rig and design imagined by the inventive genius of man.

Some of the ships would soon find their way to the shipbreaker. The days of their utility were over. Some were bound for various coastwise towns or Thames-side shipyards, to be converted into steamships. As if in defiance of the march of time, these stately old ships seemed determined to tolerate even a dirty smoke-stack, anything to perpetuate their voyages on the high seas, which by right of conquest were theirs. Others came to seek cargoes. Many, being sold to foreign companies, would lie at anchor until wanted by their new owners—beautiful clippers, whose decks

had carried thousands of Empire-builders to overseas settlements. My heart ached with sadness when I saw that goodly array of beautiful ships assembled at the Nation's scrap-heap.

There was a class of ship then finding favour as a cargo carrier, the long iron clipper, four-masted barque or ship, built especially for carrying. The upkeep of these was considerably minimised by the introduction of double topsails and top-gallant sails. The sails were a mass of brails and spilling-lines, and they carried self-reefing topsails, *i. e.*, when it became necessary to reef the sails, the reef-tackles were hauled out as the yard was lowered, and the spilling-lines, passing through thimbles in a short reef-point, and being made fast on deck as the yard came down, permitted the sail to gather up, as it were—the whole performance being done from the deck.

These iron clippers were great awkward ships—a class entirely of their own. Much of the heavy work, such as hoisting topsails, boats or anchor, was done by steam-winch, a donkey-engine being installed for that purpose. Their rigging seemed a travesty on seaman-ship. Rigging screws and wire shrouds replaced dead-eyes and rope swifters. A powerful crane on the fore-castle head fished the anchor and hove it inboard, much quicker and easier than the fish and cat fall of ancient date. Even the crew of these craft might be termed the forerunners of a new type of seaman. In the aft-deck these ships carried premium apprentices, young lads who had graduated at some famous public school, and whose parents had been bled to the tune of many pounds sterling. I remember meeting one of these young gentlemen in the Puget Sound port of old Ta-

coma, a few years before my story opens. He had deserted from his ship because all the romance had been knocked out of him, and had come to the conclusion that he had been deceived by vague dreams; the sea no longer fascinated or charmed him.

It appears that when sailing-ship owners of a certain type realised that steam had come to stay and that as traders their days were surely numbered, they thought to cut down expenses and obtain cheap labour by opening their ships as the training-grounds for the sons of those willing to subscribe the necessary premium. Sometimes the lads were well treated and justice done them, but in other instances they were sold into bondage. The young gentleman in question had been ill-treated from the first day of his arrival on board, and I believe his was no unusual case in those days. He joined the ship on a cold November day, in the West Bute Dock at Cardiff. She was a large iron clipper with long raking hull and gaunt uncanny masts and yards, spreading an enormous mass of canvas. When she rolled everything rattled, as the sailors say. A stiff mass of iron superstructure, solid and massive, the elastic give-and-take, so characteristic of the wooden and composite ship, was entirely absent. She would take over green seas at the least provocation, starving her crew on prostrated passages, and was avoided by decent deep-water men to whom she was known as a deep-sea workhouse. She was officered by creeping things called "bucko mates," the scum of the sea. When the lad stepped on board, fresh from a public school, he was as spick-and-span as a nautical outfitter could make him. With a very condescending air he requested some one on deck, whom he described

as being filthily dirty and coal-begrimed, to show him to his cabin. Unfortunately, the dirty one was his majesty the mate, who had at that moment come out of the main hatchway, where he had been supervising four other unfortunate apprentices trimming the last few truck-loads of coal which the shore-gang had not stowed to the mate's satisfaction. He looked at the new arrival for a moment with the glad eye of a tiger, and placing his black hand on the boy's coat, said:

"Don't stand there gaping about. Get those pretty clothes off, find a broom and lend a hand to wash down the decks."

From that moment the boy's life had been a little hell, and when I met him in Tacoma, I tried to persuade him to return to the ship, but he would not.

When a number of these ships are anchored together, they add a particular charm to the pageant of merchant craft, especially the display as witnessed by us from the deck of the *Anna Lombard*. Close at hand lay the wonderful new ship *France*. I believe she was built on the Clyde a few months previously, for a Bordeaux firm of shipowners. She was tremendous and lofty; nearly 350 feet in length, with five tall masts and heavy yards all built of mild steel. On her first voyage she had carried close on one hundred men in her crew, taking a general cargo from Liverpool to the Pacific coast, where she had loaded 6,100 tons of wheat for Europe. At dawn on the second day all hands came on deck to see the French wonder ship, and when our crew assembled at the galley door for morning coffee, an argument ensued as to the names of the great ship's masts. Some wise men of the sea said that Fore, Main, Mizzen, Jigger and after Jigger were

the only words in the English language that filled the bill. But Casey pushed his way to the front and said:

"Listen, me boys. I'll tell yer now the names of yon masts, and I'll not parley voo about it, no I won't. 'Tis Monday mast, Tuesday mast, Wednesday mast, Thursday mast, and Friday mast, and them boys may thank the saints o' the sea that there isn't a Saturday mast, and a Sunday mast!"

A great laugh arose at the Irishman's definition of the mast names. Finally, the opinion of the Chinese saloon cook was sought. That worthy happened to be in the galley at the time, and poked his head out of the top half of the galley door. For a moment he gazed seaward plaintively, without a smile on his parchment-like face, then said:

"You all damme foolern. Talkee, talkee allem timee. Wot for youem talkem. You all right. You all wrong. What you callem, damme foolern."

The Oriental's view of the intellectual powers of the white men caused a fresh outburst of mirth, for they all thought that Ching's venture into English had been meant to subdue the hot-headed Casey, but that gentleman smiled at the cook so charmingly and was so winsome with his blarney that even the stolid old Chinaman melted before his smiles and gave him a hot cake, much to the disgust of his assembled ship-mates.

During breakfast Captain Lombard gave me instructions to lower the steam-pinnacle. The second mate was detailed to prepare to receive the steamer, which was expected to arrive at any moment. Why this coal and machinery had not been delivered before I never knew. I did think it strange that a steamer should be

specially engaged to bring cargo to the Downs, when we could have taken bunker coal in the London river. Perhaps it was to secure secrecy and to disguise the purpose of our expedition. However, as it was no business of mine, I set about lowering the pinnacle. We worked her round to the swinging boom, then the Captain called me into the charthouse and said: "Mr. Hedger, it will be part of your duty to captain the pinnacle. My past experience convinces me that she will be most useful in towing while fishing, and tending the ship in harbour. Anyway, while the boat is in the water you will have charge, and the donkeyman will tend the engines. So see to it that she is always spick-and-span."

"That I will, sir," I returned proudly, "but please tell me, sir, am I not to go away in one of the whale-boats?"

He glanced at me sideways for a moment as though he did not quite understand my meaning.

"It is the excitement of the hunt that I love," I added with great fervour. This was true. The greatest pleasure of my life in those days was to stand in the bow of a whaleboat with harpoon poised. To feel the thrill of conquest is indeed exhilarating beyond the imagination of a landsman. You may have your big game hunts, your wonderful fishing in Florida or California, your sword-fishing in New Zealand. While I have never participated in any of these great sports, that only the very wealthy members of the race can indulge in, I say without fear of contradiction that whale-hunting surpasses them all for thrills and excitement, especially when one is waiting for a wounded mammal to rise; but more of this anon.

I saw a smile hovering round the mouth of the Captain, and feared that my sudden outburst had been indiscreet.

"I admire your enthusiasm, young man," he said. "I certainly would not think of depriving you of your rightful vocation. You will discover, I hope to your satisfaction, when details are posted, that you have charge of No. 3 whaleboat. But what I wish to tell you now, is, that I shall land at 10 o'clock. Please have the pinnace ready, as several ladies will join us."

Steve Finlay entered upon his duty as engineer of the pinnace with great enthusiasm, for the boat was indeed a beauty. She had been formerly built to the order of a well-known Flemish towing firm, for use on the river Scheldt. Her engines were exceedingly powerful, and it was calculated that she could tow the *Anna Lombard* on a small consumption of coal, and maintain a speed of five knots in calm weather. She was a comfortable boat for harbour work, and could seat twenty-four passengers. Over the cockpit were steel towing-bars which formed part of the canopy of the cabin top. In the forepart before the engine-room was a small steering-house with wheel and tiny telegraph complete, and ample accommodation for two men who would form the crew. When the funnel was shipped and she lay beside the gangway with steam up, she gave our ship quite a man-o'-war appearance. I felt very proud to be her helmsman.

Steaming through the fleet of anchored merchantmen I saw that our tender possessed virtues that I little dreamed of. The Captain, in conversation with me as we made for the old landing-stage at Deal, suggested that the pinnace would be worth her weight in gold

when towing a dead whale to the ship, and I realised that she would indeed save us many hours of hard toil in an open boat.

At the landing-stage we found a party awaiting our arrival. There were four ladies and three gentlemen, and a great pile of luggage, which was being loaded into the tug *Channel Bird* of Dover. One of the ladies I recognised as Mrs. Richester. She smiled at me as she entered the cabin of the pinnace. Then Captain Lombard stepped on shore, requesting me to convey the guests to the ship and return later to the landing.

I soon became accustomed to the movement of the little craft, which breasted the waves of the Channel cross seas in splendid style. It was most difficult to realise that she was indeed a tender to a South Sea whaler. I seemed to be suddenly transported to some luxurious yacht. It was almost sacrilegious to call the *Anna Lombard* a whaler, and as we drew alongside, I overheard one of our crew, a newly-appointed quartermaster, say:

"I wonder when the surprises of this 'ere ship will come to an end?"

I found the deck littered with heavy cases which apparently contained some strange machinery. The steamer had arrived—the *Aberfelde* of Hamburg, just an ordinary coastal tramp, and the process of unloading the coal was under the supervision of Mr. Richester, who waved a greeting to his wife from the bridge. The coal was in bags containing about one cwt., and these were hoisted on board on a sling tray and lowered into the fore hold. The after hatch was open to receive bundles of barrel staves, heads and hoops which were stacked in the after between decks. The boat-



swain supervised their stowage. This was the first opportunity I had had of visiting the after between decks, and I was surprised to find that the lower hold was filled with sand ballast, right up to the lower deck, which ran completely fore and aft. The after part had evidently been used for passenger accommodation at some period, for along each side was a row of port-holes, each firmly plugged and screwed with iron protection plates. No expense had been spared in the ship's construction, for the ironwork and copper fastenings were of the finest workmanship.

Some of our passengers' heavy luggage was placed in security in this part of the ship. During the afternoon I returned to the landing-stage for Captain Lombard, and the steamer, having delivered her consignment, slipped her moorings at sunset and returned to Hamburg through the Gull Channel.

That evening at dinner I made the acquaintance of our passengers, who I discovered were to make the passage to the Argentine with us; that is, the ladies were. The gentlemen were to accompany us to the Pacific, for they comprised the scientific members of the expedition.

Mrs. Lombard, the Captain's wife, was the original Anna Lombard, for it was after her the craft was named. She was not many years younger than her husband, and she seemed to possess a vitality and love of laughter which was magnetic. Her beautiful rosy cheeks and smiling lips made her very attractive, and I learned that she had a charming personality, which was reproduced in her daughter, Mrs. Richester. She seemed almost as youthful as her daughter, and her hair showed little or no traces of becoming grey.

Besides Mrs. Richester there was a German lady who spoke very little English. She was the wife of one of the gentlemen, a Dr. Brennan, who introduced her to me with great ceremony. Dr. Brennan was in charge of the scientific side of our expedition.

The fourth lady was the wife of Dr. Lun—or Professor Lun. She was an English lady about twenty years her husband's junior. There was something very charming about this cultured couple, which appealed to me from the moment I met them.

The only single man of the party was Dr. Schwartz. He was a much younger man than the others, but sulky and sour looking. He was a German of the Prussian school, and had served on the staff of medical men attached to the Imperial Court at Berlin. I might mention here that this gentleman never voluntarily addressed one word to me during the whole voyage.

Again, it was forcibly impressed upon me that the voyage was destined to be of more than usual interest, so after entering up my private log-book, and recording the impressions of the day, I sought the quarterdeck for an after-dinner smoke. The sound of music came from the forward part of the ship. The concertina players were practising. Presently the carpenter came from his berth carrying a large silver-mounted melodeon. It was a beautiful instrument and he was a perfect player. Captain Lombard came on deck, and said something in Russian to Ivan Domeroff, who immediately commenced to play the opening strains of a waltz. Then the ladies appeared, and the forward hands crowded aft, and the poop and quarterdeck was converted into a ballroom. All hands were charmed with the haunting melody, and very soon other instru-

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

ments appeared. Two violins, a Spanish guitar, and it was not long before this improvised orchestra was playing in some kind of harmony which was very creditable considering they had had no previous practice.

The crew of the nearby *France* and the English barque *Dowargo* were evidently enjoying the music. We could see them in the light of the rising moon, hanging over the taff-rails of their respective ships, smoking their pipes and listening intently.

Ever and anon, a fishing cobbler or galley punt, accompanied by a French "chasse Marie" would hook on to our mizzen chains, pausing for a while to listen, no doubt, as Joe Splendid remarked to me, wondering why such music issued from the deck of a Pacific whaler.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SAILMAKING

**A**T eight o'clock that evening, all hands were mustered aft on the quarterdeck for the selection of the watches, or rather the calling over of names, for in the details posted in the forecastle and berths of petty officers each man's place was clearly outlined, also his duty defined while whaling or handling the ship in a sea-way.

A fresh south-easterly wind prevailed, but as the glass was rising for a change Captain Lombard determined to weigh anchor as soon as the wind veered in our favour, and stand down Channel at the earliest opportunity. It was decided to adopt sea-watches right away, so lots were cast for the first watch below, and it fell to the starboard watch. Captain Lombard came to the break of the poop before dismissing the men, and said :

"Petty officers and men, I am going to take this opportunity of telling you that I shall expect strict attention to the rules and regulations laid down in the posted details, which by this time you must thoroughly understand. No doubt you realise that the expedition upon which we are about to embark is no ordinary whaling trip. We simply seek sperm whale for the sake of the liquid contained in the cavity of the head. As you will see, we carry no 'try works' so you will be spared the

labour of trying out a carcase. Special machinery for refining the spermaceti will be set up in the forecastle deck-house to which only the members of the scientific branch of the expedition will have access. Your function will be to raise sperm whale and bring them alongside. Circumstances will control all our actions after they are caught. Any breach of discipline will be severely dealt with by curtailing certain privileges and the withholding of allowances. Every man will receive, in addition to his wages, a bonus of one pound per man per catch. Therefore, with your already liberal scale of wages, the above conditions should be sufficient inducement to command your wholehearted co-operation in our undertaking. There will be no work more than is necessary for the safe navigation of the ship after 4 P.M. each day. Saturday afternoon and Sunday will always be observed as holidays wherever possible. In addition to the Board of Trade allowance, a food scale has been drawn up which appears to me the most liberal that has ever come under my notice. Should there be any breaches of rule or any slackness, that allowance will be withdrawn. We shall revert then to the Board of Trade allowances. A tot of rum will be issued each day, at four bells in the dog-watch, but no man will be permitted to take his allowance forward. All complaints will be listened to and duly considered if submitted through the medium of the boatswain, who will be responsible for law and order forward." Then he turned to the charthouse where Ching, the saloon cook, stood waiting orders, and said:

"Ching, bring up the rum issue."

For a moment an uncanny silence prevailed, because all hands were more or less taken by surprise, for the

custom of a grog issue had long since been abandoned in the mercantile marine. The men had the good sense not to make any demonstration, and they went silently forward to talk over the prospects of the voyage in the confines of the fore-castle.

Next morning when I came on deck at 4 o'clock, the wind had freshened into a westerly gale bringing with it a number of ships under canvas from seawards. At daybreak a large four-masted square-rigged ship came sailing majestically up Channel with the wind on the quarter. She had evidently shortened sail as the breeze freshened, for her upper top-gallant sails were hanging loose, as also were some of her light stay-sails, and men were aloft furling them. Racing side by side, on her weather quarter was a saucy-looking tug. The huge ship presented a fine picture as she sped through the fleet of anchored ships in a way possible only under the guidance of a navigator of the old school. As she carefully picked her way through the Downs loud cheers greeted her. One could imagine the bargaining between the two captains. The homeward-bounder under canvas and the tug-boat, whose master has no rival in the art of striking a bargain or arguing the price of a towage. They must have come to terms, for as they neared the Forelands her top-sails were clewed up and lowered to the shanty of "I'll spend my money on Sally Brown," which we knew by instinct was the song chanted.

Between us and the Bunt Head bell-buoy, the London tug *Endeavour* was towing the pretty little ship *Cimbia*, looking as smart as ever in a coat of fresh paint. About two miles distant, amidst a fleet of fishing-boats—Kentish cobbles "doing" the Goodwin

Sands for flat fish, I saw another small barque coming up before the wind under topsails and courses. Like most deep-water men I simply ignored the many steamers churning their way Londonwards on the top of the tide; but they all added movement to the great picture in this small portion of the earth's surface, which is the world's greatest international highway.

After washing down the decks, the usual preliminary for a day's work in a sailing-ship, the crew were engaged in stowing away stores that had been brought on board the previous day by the steamer from Hamburg. The cases containing the new machinery were taken to the deck-house, where the carpenter and Doctors Brennan and Schwartz commenced work upon the mysterious refining plant behind closed doors.

During the afternoon the sailmaker and I commenced work in the between deck, repairing a main lower topsail. Sailmaking was always a very pleasant occupation—at least I thought so—it being a branch of my profession in which I took a great interest. It was Joe Splendid who informed the mate of my capabilities in this direction, so when we met at the saloon table for lunch, the conversation twisted round to the art of sailmaking. Mr. Haskell told me that in the sail locker were several sails badly in need of repair, some of the old sails which had not been bent for years. A suit of new sails had been purchased, but Captain Lombard was anxious to possess another suit. He had intended to place an order with an English firm in Gravesend, but upon inquiry found they had gone out of business. Finally, the Captain decided to engage a sailmaker, and as Mr. Jones—who was an all-round craftsman—had been specially recommended, the diffi-

culty of obtaining an additional suit of sails had been overcome by shipping the necessary canvas, roping, etc. I gladly offered my services, for Jones and I had become very friendly. He was very proud of his trade and possessed both practical and technical knowledge of it. The sail locker of the *Anna Lombard* was in the 'tween decks right aft, being a portion of the fore cabin, formerly used to accommodate passengers.

Two seamen came down, and we carried the sail through the bulkhead doorway to the light of the open main hatchway. Here we could work in comfort, for there was ample space to spread the sail and find the defects. When we settled down to palm-and-needle work, Jones became very chatty and opened conversation by saying:

"Did you ever hear of a whaling-ship taking lady passengers, Mr. Hedger?"

"I cannot say that I ever have," I returned with a laugh at his question, for Jones, like most of the forward hands, was consumed with curiosity concerning our passengers. Of course, it must not be supposed that the crew were completely satisfied with Captain Lombard's speech of the evening before. I had several times caught vague suspicious whisperings, but as Joe Splendid remarked, "They will soon settle down when they get used to the unusual conditions. You must remember, Mr. Hedger, this old ship has sprung more surprises upon her crew than any ship of my acquaintance, and I've been sailing over forty years. A sailor is always more or less suspicious of new and improved conditions."

"Have you ever been to sea in a whaler, Mr. Jones?" I questioned.



"No, sir," he answered. "Had it not been for the great inducement offered by Captain Lombard I would not have joined this ship."

"But we are not an ordinary whaler," I returned.

"No," he said with a smile, "that may be, and according to the terms of our articles the voyage is from six months to three years. But I do think the Captain might have been more explicit. Surely it is due to us to know a little more about the nature of the work that we will be called upon to do."

"Why do you let such things trouble you, Mr. Jones?" I asked. "Surely neither you nor any of the crew were in a ship which offered better conditions than the *Anna Lombard*?"

"Look here, Mr. Hedger," he said forcibly, "I was once shipmates with a fellow who sailed in a 'Carney ship.' Everything was lovely—the food good, grog-o, the skipper! a more sociable devil never sailed. As soon as the ship poked her nose into the Atlantic the lid was taken off the hobs of hell. She was a 'Carney ship' all right, and long before she reached the Horn, all hands wished they'd never seen her."

I once requested an old shell-back to tell me how the term "Carney ship" originated. His answer was so spontaneous that I was forced to believe it. It was like this. Carney was the name of a certain captain, a man of evil repute who immortalised the phrase "Carney ship" and caused the introduction of the word into seafaring phraseology. The word "Carney" is often substituted for the word "hypocrisy," and who will wonder?

When Captain Carney needed a crew he would visit the seamen's mission in whatever port he happened to

be. He would join lustily in the singing and make some kind of confession which led his listeners to suppose that he was a wayward sinner who wished to repent, and that in the future he was determined to lead a Christian life in spite of all opposition. As he had formerly been known as a bad man, it was his intention, henceforth and for ever, to be good, loving and kind, and any man joining his ship need not be afraid; he would receive a Christian welcome. This often proved a successful bait and secured Captain Carney a crew when all other efforts failed owing to his evil reputation as a man-handler.

(The reader must forgive my introducing so many incidents of seafaring superstitions. I am simply detailing what actually occurred as the episodes were set down in my log-book.)

"I would stake my life that this ship is no Carney ship," I returned eagerly.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, Mr. Hedger," he replied as he cut a fresh length of twine and passed it deftly through the eye of his needle.

Ever and anon he would glance in my direction and seemed quite satisfied that I understood the art of sail-making, that I was quick with the needle and that my stitches were neat and professional. Presently he said:

"It is very pleasing to meet one who can handle a palm and needle like you, Mr. Hedger. Where did you learn?"

I glanced at him out of the corner of my eye. His pock-marked face was aglow with genuine friendliness as he turned a clew-crinkle. He thrust the fid into the strands of the bolt-rope and paused to watch me as I answered:

"I have sailed with three deep-water captains who were great sailmakers. With the last particularly, sewing canvas was a fetish. Every snap of fine weather, out would come the sail-bench. 'Come on, Hedger,' he would say, and hour after hour we stitched away in silence. We made a new suit of sails that voyage."

Sailmaking by hand is now quite obsolete owing to the introduction of the sewing-machine. The great steel clippers of the eighties and nineties carried sail made from very coarse and heavy canvas with wire bolt-ropes. The earring-cringles and clew-cringles of topsails and courses were huge iron rings, extremely heavy to pull on to the yard, especially on a dark, cold, wet night, or when the sail was frozen stiff like a piece of timber. In the old days it was customary to clew the sail up to a quarter-block, a few feet from the centre of the yard, the leech being neatly folded and passed along the yard and the sail rolled up to the jack-stay by the men on the foot ropes. Such a proceeding became almost impossible on the great steel ships of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Their top-gallant sails would have made courses, or lower sails, for many a good ship of half a century earlier. The stowing of topsails and courses in heavy weather was in most cases an all-hands job. But one day a sensible idea struck some skipper and he clewed up his great sails to the yard-arms. Then with a series of brails and leech-lines the sails were furled without a great deal of trouble. That was a decided improvement on Pinkney's self-reefing gear which was composed of a rolling spar. I was never shipmates with this idea, but Joe Splendid explained the principle to me. The sail could be wound up entirely on the rolling spar, by means of a parbuckle

or reefing halyards which led from the topmast head to the yard-arm. Joe, who was considered an authority on ships' rigging, told me that this method soon died out when Captain Howe's double topsails came into use, and they represent the last phase in the evolution of sailing craft.

All through the ages, since the savage first navigated his dug-out with sails of plaited grass, the sailmaking trade has provided work for a large number of people. One need only go back to the days of Elizabeth and the ships that fought the Spanish Armada to see from pictures of ships of that period that sailmaking was far more difficult then than thirty years ago.

Jones was very proud of his calling. He often referred to it as being one of the oldest trades in existence; but like everything in connection with the sea, the progress of time and the coming of steam is slowly but surely driving the sailing-ship off the sea. The sailmaker will soon pass away and his art be forgotten.

At 4 o'clock the boatswain's pipe sounded clear up decks, and work on the sail ceased, and by 5 o'clock all hands were piped below.

A merry party gathered round the saloon table for dinner that evening. Mrs. Lombard seemed to be the prime mover of the conversation. From close observation I discovered that she was in many ways a most remarkable lady. For one so well advanced in years she seemed to possess wonderful vitality. She had a way of glancing into one's eyes which many people perhaps would have found uncanny, but I was soon talking to her quite familiarly. Her conversation was interesting and she made me feel very much at ease in her company. I found myself listening to her story of

Professor Lun's wonderful discovery of the medicated spermaceti, about which she was very enthusiastic. Then she closely questioned me about the anatomy of the whale and how we proposed to dissect the carcass while at sea.

"Of course," she said with a smile, "I have not been a sailor's wife for thirty years without knowing something about ships and the sea. I have been many voyages with my husband, but I have never seen a whale caught. I hope now that we are on a real whaler my desires will be realised and I shall witness a whale hunt." She glanced mischievously at her husband, who was talking to Mrs. Lun. The second mate hearing her remark, said:

"Yes, Ma, we must stage a whale hunt for your special benefit. Will you go away in my boat or Number 3?"

"James," she returned sharply. "If I do get a chance to go chasing whales it will not be in your boat, but in the boat commanded by this young man. If all that Captain N—— of the *B*—— said about him is true, I shall certainly get some thrills."

Blushing like a guilty schoolboy, and feeling extremely awkward, but nevertheless much amused at the thought of this dear old lady being in my whaleboat during a fight with a savage whale, I said:

"Madam, the open whaleboat is no place for a lady. Furthermore, I would not advise you to come on deck should we commence fishing before we reach the Argentine. The perfume from a 'trying-out' plant is not exactly Otto-de-roses."

"That I realise, Mr. Hedger," she said sweetly, her laughing eyes dancing as she accepted a challenge for

a debate upon women's rights in a whaling-ship. I could see the other ladies were interested, and as the stewards removed the dishes Madam Lombard continued:

"You may find me in your boat yet, young man!"

"Then," I said seriously, "I will not venture too close to a fish, for I could not risk being upset with a lady in the boat."

"Have you ever been upset?" questioned Mrs. Richester seriously. I did not know whether to answer that question, or try to turn the conversation to other channels, but as all eyes were turned in my direction as if expecting to hear something of my experiences, I said hesitatingly:

"Yes, I was very badly smashed up while attacking a school of sperm whale, near the Aleutian Islands."

"Won't you please tell us how it happened?" said Mrs. Lombard.

Before I had time to reply, Captain Lombard proposed that I tell my story. Having already heard full details from my old friend, Captain N——, he said he would like to hear my side of it as I was one of the principal actors. So I commenced:

"It was one of those beautiful days so rarely met with in the extreme North Pacific regions. We were taking advantage of the prevailing calm to make certain readjustments aloft, when someone shouted, 'There she blows!' and we saw a large school of sperm whale stretching across the horizon from starboard to port, vanishing in the distance in almost endless numbers. Joe Splendid, who is now boatswain of this ship, told me that never in his long career in whaling-ships had he seen such a number. As we drifted southward, in-

fluenced by the North Equatorial current, we saw that they were sleeping. They lay on the surface just awash, like half-hidden rocks, their spouting weak and very feeble, just tiny jets of spray which looked like puffs of steam in the distance.

"All hands were soon engaged clearing away the boats. One by one they left the ship, each selecting a victim towards which he steered, certain of a most successful haul. The mate's boat got fast to a big dam, then my harpooner plunged his weapon into a vital spot of a monster that suddenly rose close to us. This creature—a huge bull—turned as if to investigate the cause of the commotion, for the mate's whale had sounded and roused the whole school into activity, and they scattered. We gradually backed away from our whale, for it lay some distance away, working its tail and pectoral fins as though it would attack our boat, when presently from out of the depths of the ocean leaped several killers. A terrible fight commenced. Our boat no longer claimed the great whale's attention, for it dashed off along the surface at a tremendous pace, dragging the boat with it, followed by a herd of killers. Suddenly it stopped, and we were in danger of over-riding it, but we stopped the rapid motion of our boat just in time to see the monster turn, and with open mouth make a rush for us. As the great whale gathered speed, it rose out of the water like the side of a house, with a beast of a killer hanging on to its jaws, and I could see the white teeth and flash of its glaring eyes as it clung to its victim. This member of the lesser whale family is, I think, the most ferocious creature in the sea. The scientific name is *Orca gladiator*. It is a large carnivorous porpoise with elongated

tapered jaws armed with formidable teeth. This specimen was fully thirty feet long. As it rose from the water, carried high and dry by the vitality of the great sperm, my harpooner seized a second weapon and let drive at the killer. He must have struck something very hard, for the shaft broke close to the stave. But the blow caused the killer to tumble into the water with a mighty splash, its rapidly moving tail landing in our boat and striking the stroke oarsman a terrible blow, breaking his arm and smashing his oar into splinters. At the same time, the sperm commenced to flurry, rolling over and over, and ejecting blood and water, and portions of the gigantic cuttlefish, high into the air.

"The killer in its fall had smashed portions of the starboard gunwale and our boat commenced to leak. Thinking we were the sole cause of the trouble, the sperm turned on our boat, and came straight for us with open mouth. One of our crew hastened aft to assist me with the steering oar, and we frantically endeavoured to turn the boat out of danger, but it was too late. On came the sperm with wide open mouth, vomiting blood and blubber. The water was lashed into a vivid red mass—a sea of blood. Suddenly the killers returned to the attack, and we were horrified witnesses of a combat such as is seldom seen by mortals.

"Into the mouth of the advancing sperm darted a killer, while another shot out of the water, taking a flying leap over its prey, ignoring our presence entirely. Over and over rolled the whale. Two more killers appeared and the fight became terrible, holding us spell-bound. We hoisted the usual signal, 'Boat smashed,' for we were sinking rapidly. The stroke oarsman lay



in the bottom of the boat in a state of collapse. We were helpless and were forced to watch the sea-tigers tearing their victim to pieces. Presently the sperm turned in its own length. The flukes of the tail hit our boat a mighty blow, shattering it into ten thousand pieces. I was sent flying through the water as though shot from a gun, and fell with an awkward splash quite close to the dying whale. It was the last dying flurry and the backward-and-forward movement of the creature's tail that had wrecked our boat.

"When I gathered my scattered wits, I saw my crew supporting the injured man. Every moment I expected to feel the cruel jaws of a killer take hold of my legs. I saw something vanish into the depths below; it was either a killer or a very big shark, and I heard someone shout, 'Keep your legs moving. Make a splash.' Then I heard the sound of oars and saw the cheery face of the mate, who threw me a line from the stern, to which I clung for a moment to get my breath. I then placed my feet against the mountain of blubber beside me, and was soon able to scramble into the first mate's boat.

"The killers had vanished, as also had the rest of the school of whales. Poor Jack Marvin sat in the stern nursing his broken arm and cursing under his breath. Someone gave him a smoke which seemed to soothe him, and after about an hour's hard pulling, we moored our catch to the starboard side of the *B*——, thinking ourselves most fortunate that our adventure had not ended more seriously."

"Young man," said Professor Lun, "you were indeed very fortunate. Tell me, does the killer often attack the whale?"

## SAILMAKING

"That was the only time I had ever seen a killer, but I believe they hunt in packs like land-wolves, and do not hesitate to attack a whale when opportunity offers," I returned, rising from the table and following the mate up the companion stairway.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

PROFESSOR LUN seemed extremely interested in the little episode told in the last chapter. As he followed me to the quarterdeck for a smoke after dinner, he returned to the conversation of the dinner-table. His excuse for joining me was that the ladies were discussing music in the saloon, the mates were in the Captain's room, while the doctors were too busy talking shop to be companionable, and if I did not mind, there were one or two questions he would like to ask me in connection with my terrible experience with the killers.

I felt rather shy and reserved in the company of this learned gentleman, but there was something about him which attracted me. He seemed to be very devoted to his wife, a pretty little English lady who, as I before remarked, was very many years his junior. The Professor was about fifty-five years of age; tall, good-looking, and his round, cheery, clean-shaven face made him look much younger. He was on leave of absence from his college, to enable him to make the voyage in the *Anna Lombard*. His wonderful discovery of a permanent cure for a particularly ravishing complaint had carried him to the very pinnacle of fame in the medical world, bringing him great wealth. As he walked the deck with me on that fine moonlight night,

it was rather difficult to realise that he was indeed the wonderful genius whom every newspaper in the land had so loudly eulogised.

"Your yarn," said he with a smile, "will not in any way deter Mrs. Lombard from venturing into a whale-boat if the opportunity offers."

"Do you think she would really venture?" I asked anxiously.

"One never knows what a woman will do when once her mind is made up," he returned.

"Then I shall be on my guard. If it does so happen that the lady is allowed to go away in my boat, I shall take good care not to go too close to a fish," I said determinedly.

The Professor pulled hard at his cigar and glanced up at the whaleboats standing in their skids beneath the davits.

"Tell me," he said thoughtfully, "does the killer whale live on its own species?"

"That I cannot say," I returned, "but from what I have read on the subject and from my own observation, I believe the killer is an enemy of every fish in the sea. I have seen him dash into a school of albacore (*Germo alalonga*), sending these beautiful fish flying out of the water in gigantic leaps as they made haste to escape his terrible jaws. But whether he is a successful hunter of the albacore (or Tunny) I do not know. I have seen him catch a porpoise (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) and break him clean in two, while on the surface of the water. It happened this way" (I was warming up to my subject).

"I have often hesitated to speak of this incident for fear of being accused of dealing in exaggerated fish

yarns. But, nevertheless, what I am going to tell you, sir, is the absolute truth.

"One evening in the doldrums of the South Pacific, we lay lopping and floundering in a huge cross swell. The oily, restless, rolling water seemed alive with fish. In the course of twelve hours, I think every specimen of the sea's inhabitants had visited us, from the whale to the tiny flying-fish (*Exocoetus evolvans*). We were grain-laden from a Puget Sound port, and of course were well down to the Plimsoll mark. Close beside us rolled and gambolled a school of porpoises, rolling very leisurely and lazily. As one old shell-back remarked, they were too damned lazy to jump, they simply rolled. Presently, there was a scatter, just as if the sky had suddenly opened and from nowhere had come a horrible long-jawed killer. He grabbed a fish fair in the middle, and as he rose out of the water, snapped his jaws tight; and the porpoise fell in half. The two portions quickly disappeared, and the killer turned a complete somersault back into the sea; then all was silent. When we at last recovered from our astonishment, the old shell-back seaman said, 'One may go to sea for another hundred years and never witness such a sight again.'"

"You were saying that the killer has a particular liking for the tongue of a sperm whale, Mr. Hedger," said the Professor. "Is that idea fairly general?"

"I think so," I replied. "I also think that if you ask Captain Lombard, who has been in command of many whaling-ships and has seen more of these things than I, you will find, in almost every case where a whale has been attacked by a killer, the tongue is found missing. But here comes my friend the boatswain. He can confirm all I have told you, and can also give you many

interesting details concerning the killer whale and the razor-back."

Joe hesitated for a moment at the door of his berth in the after deck-house which he shared with the sail-maker. He came aft at my signal and I introduced him to the Professor. After answering several questions about the habits of the lesser whales, he fell in beside us. A sailor can always talk with greater ease and comfort while pacing the deck. Joe recounted several incidents in his experience, one episode being particularly interesting, bearing as it did upon the question under discussion.

"It was while in the China Seas in the old whaler *Bitten* that the ferocity of the killer was fully illustrated," said Joe. "We had followed a school of sperm whale for several days down through the Formosa Straits into the China Seas. For some reason these waters seem to be a favourite resort of the sperm at certain periods of the year. I have heard it said by old whalemens that the China Sea is the world's hatchery of the squid or calamary. It is believed that here this species of cuttlefish goes through a certain stage in its development which enables it to cast off its peculiar pen-shaped horny shell, which has come to be known as the sea-sleeve, and is used by Chinese merchants as a receptacle for many of their nefarious drugs. Anyway," continued he, "while trying out whales caught in these regions, I have seen a large number of these cuttlefish in their stomachs, a fact which convinces me that it is the liking for this kind of food that causes the great mammals to congregate in these waters. One morning, our boats got into the school and we attacked a dam and her calf. Instead of flying into the

teeth of the wind, the calf flurried and quickly died, almost as soon as the harpoon went home. Then we turned our attention to the mother. When we got to within striking distance of her, we saw a great commotion going on near the dead calf. The mother whale did not seem to heed the thrust of our harpoon which had been driven into her blubber right up to the hilt. She made direct for her babe, followed by our boat, as we were fast to her.

"A school of killers had surrounded the small whale and were tearing the carcase to pieces like a pack of wolves round a dead sheep. We killed the mother, then turned our attention to the mob of sea-tigers. We wounded them with blubber-spades and pierced them with darts, but not before the lower jaws of both whales were torn open and the tongues consumed, could we beat them off. We towed the dam to the ship, leaving the calf to the mercy of the killers. Old Captain Reilly swore some, I might tell you gentlemen," said Joe with a laugh, "because he always maintained that the blubber round the bed of a whale's tongue, gave the finest oil. His argument was that the killer some years before had given him the hint. Furthermore, certain Scottish buyers would always pay more per barrel for this superior whale oil."

"Very interesting," said the Professor. "I hope, Mr. Splendid, that you will recite other experiences, for I have left behind me a period of my life which has been spent in consuming and absorbing technical knowledge of natural history. I now hope to gain something practical, which to my mind, is real knowledge. I thank you for your kindness."

Joe was somewhat taken aback by the Professor's

gratitude. Like myself he stood in awe of this learned person, and I think he was rather relieved when eight bells struck, and the ceremony of relieving the watch called him forward.

The next morning the voyage began in earnest, for at daybreak all hands were called to heave anchor and make sail. Notwithstanding the early hour and the keen south-easterly wind, our passengers came on deck to see the last of the Downs anchorage. And amidst a burst of spring sunshine, we piled on sail after sail, and soon walked away from the outward-bound fleet of clippers that followed us down Channel. Fortunately, the wind held fair, and the *Anna Lombard* showed a fine pair of heels (which is a sailor's term for good movement). There is something divinely superb in the spring of a well-constructed, properly balanced sailing-ship which landsmen cannot possibly understand. You may have your mad whirl of machinery in your great ocean liners; your fast-speeding railway and electric-cars; even the modern motor-cars and flying machines; but give me a spanking breeze and a well-found composite ship, and I ask no other thrill. Every fibre of my body becomes quickly in tune with the elements, and I almost burst with enthusiasm for the solemn grandeur and majesty of the wondrous works of Nature.

A person who crosses the ocean in a steamer, and who travels on land by express train, undoubtedly gains in speed, but he loses much else. He misses the thousand beauties; he has no contact with Nature, no sense of exultation which comes with locomotion induced by sail. I think it was Lord Brassey who said that once an engine is put into a ship the charm of the sea is



gone. I can endorse that statement because I have witnessed the various stages of transition from sail to steam, and I regret that the charm of the sea has vanished.

I will not attempt to describe the run across the Atlantic in detail. It would take too much time and space and I am afraid my reader is already impatient to get to the South Sea whaling-grounds.

In less than nine days we sighted Madeira and then caught the north-east trade winds which carried us past the Grande Canaries in good style.

All hands were now settling down to the voyage in real earnest. The suspicions of the forward hands had not been confirmed. The *Anna Lombard* had not turned out to be a "Carney ship," neither had the officers become "buckos," but the critical sailormen still firmly believed that their suspicions might be confirmed after the passengers had been landed at the Argentine capital. On their part they were determined that no breach of discipline should deprive them of their many almost-unheard-of privileges.

That passage to the Argentine is marked in my log-book as the most enjoyable period of my whole seafaring career. The dances on the main deck, the concerts and musical evenings in the spacious saloon, are memories which I now love to dwell upon. One incident in passing I must recount, and it is thoroughly in keeping with the many surprises sprung upon me by the *Anna Lombard*. It was the discovery that Kong, the chief steward, was none other than an exiled Chinese prince. I have previously remarked upon the unusual superior refinement of Kong, and the fact that he was a privileged person on the ship. He was very popular with

the passengers, and it was no uncommon thing to see him seated at the saloon piano with the ladies gathered round him, giving exhibitions of the music of his countrymen. I found great pleasure in his friendship also. We would walk the deck together far into the night, and I would listen with great interest to his stories of life in his beloved China, the folklore and the doings of historical personages and philosophers, but the very mention of foreign missionaries seemed to upset him. He would say didactically:

"Christianity will never progress to any extent in China because the psychology of the Chinese is so little understood by the white races."

Then he would lay his delicate hand upon my arm and draw me closer to him, saying in an undertone:

"I don't like to discuss the question of religion, Mr. Hedger, but I must tell you this. Your missionaries could find plenty of work to do in the great cities of England if they were in earnest and did their Master's work according to His mandate."

This was Kong's philosophy, and I quite agreed with him. He explained that he had been educated at an English public school; that through the intrigues of certain foreign agents and company promoters who caused a rebellion among his father's people, he had been forced to flee his country. I did not wonder at his bitterness. Then he told me how he had met Captain Lombard, and as he unfolded his story my admiration for him increased tenfold. After a brief silence, as he fell into step beside me, he said:

"My father was a ruling prince whose long line of ancestors had lived and reigned in a northern province for many a hundred years. We lived in great comfort

and contentment until the coming of the white traders, whose presence my father resented. He ordered his people to expel them from the land. But Western people and their methods of business had become so permanently fixed round the Emperor and the Court at Peking, it was impossible for a small Principality like ours to stem the rising tide of progress indefinitely. The great war of 1861 found my father's estates confiscated, and the family forced to leave the country. Some went to Korea, some to Russia and some to Northern India. I was in London when the news of the family misfortune reached me, spending a holiday with one of England's famous nobles. I had money in plenty. The great clubs were open to me as the heir-apparent to one who stood within the shadow of the Imperial throne. One day I receive a message which say, 'Return to China quickly.' I go, but when I reach San Francisco I hear of the changes in our province brought about by the death of my father. I reach China, and secretly disguised go to Canton to the house of a rich merchant, a supporter of my father. Of course, I have no money. Our rich estates and lands had been divided among the hired officials who assisted the Peking Government to overthrow my father's rule. I cannot return to England to continue my education at Oxford. I dare not go to my father's province, so my friend gave me one of his sampans, and I take cargo to ships from my friend's warehouse. I make plenty of money because I speak and write good English. Then I marry my friend's daughter. My name now Kong San."

I thought I saw tears mount to his eyes. His association with European life had taught him to express

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emotions in his face. He fumbled for a pocket beneath his long garment, then said sadly as he withdrew his hand: "I love my wife, she very beautiful. Look!"

He held up for my inspection a perfect specimen of Chinese enamel ware. It was a miniature painting of a lovely lady with tiny almond eyes and almost smiling lips. By the look of tenderness that came into his eyes, I knew that he must have loved her with all the strength of his Oriental soul. As the medallion lay in my hand with the light of the setting sun shining upon it, Kong stood with folded hands hidden by the sleeves of his long mandarin robe. I thought at that moment that he must have cultivated a great liking for me to have thus confided his story. Presently he continued with a soft musical ring in his voice:

"We marry as is the custom of our country, and we make our home on board of my sampan. We love each other very much. We love so much we all the same one person. One child, two child come to us. Then by and by another, and we so happy, taking cargo down the river and out to ships. No one know I a prince of northern province."

It was evident that the memory of his wife caused him to be pervaded by emotional feelings of sorrow and regret, for he took a turn or two up and down the quarterdeck in silence, then went on:

"One day we take a cargo of oil from an English whaling-ship. We lay alongside, a lot of sampans in tiers waiting their turn to load. One big sampan take fire, then another. Plenty of shouting and excited screaming, and confused orders to cast off burning boats. My sampan catch fire. I nearly go mad. Cap-

tain Lombard came to help get my wife and babies from the cabin. He push me on one side and jump into the cabin and pass up the babies, then return for my wife. He bring her up in a blanket and carry her to his ship. He lay her on his own bed. Then he send a steward for medicine. The wife of another sampan owner take my babies. But my wife die. Then something inside here die too." He laid his hand upon his breast and bowed his head in sorrow.

"I have been with Captain Lombard ever since," continued Kong. "I will serve him and his family so long as life does last, for the spirit of my wife tell me it is right that I do so."

I thought what a wonderful prince and ruler he would have made; but now his life was broken by a great sorrow and he was quite content to pass his days as the servant of the man who had tried to save the life of the woman he loved. This was gratitude indeed.

"Are your children living?" I questioned.

"Yes," he replied, "they are living in London. One is fourteen years of age and the other is twelve years, and the youngest nine."

I returned the precious medallion and said, "It is indeed a beautiful picture, Kong."

"Yes," he said sadly, as a great tear coursed slowly down his cheek. "Some day I shall see her again. Then she will be more grand and beautiful than when I last saw her. She is waiting for me in a very lovely garden, and when I go to her she will never leave me."

I was somewhat perplexed, almost worried, for some time after Kong left me to meditate upon his story. Was this Chinese philosophy, or some new-fangled idea

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which charmed the fancy of those who had lost dear ones, irrespective of country or creed?

Anyway, I thought these ideas were divinely beautiful, and if they were samples of Chinese paganism, may the gods send me more pagans as shipmates!

## CHAPTER X

### MAGELLAN'S STRAITS

**A**T daybreak on the 20th of June, fifty-nine days after leaving the coast of England, we sighted Flores Island at the entrance of the River Plate—or Rio Plata. The river here is about two hundred miles wide, but it narrows very rapidly. With all kites aloft, the clews of the courses lifted, and all hands at their stations, we arrived off Monte Video where the river is about half the width.

The journey up this great waterway is dull and dreary, having the charm of neither a river nor the open sea. It consists of a vast expanse of dirty, muddy, yellow water, marked by buoys and wrecks of ships which have grounded in shoaly water. A pilot boarded us and suggested that we shorten sail, which we did by reducing the canvas to upper-topsails, and thus under easy sail progressed until evening, when we anchored apparently amidst a waste of rolling, rushing water with no land visible. At daybreak we were off again under topsails, this time with a strong breeze on the quarter, which carried us up to the anchorage before the city of Buenos Ayres about twelve miles distant. There was no improvement in the colour of the water—the same tumbling yellow turmoil rushing down from the Argentine Andes some hundreds of miles away, losing its force as it reaches the sea.

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Preparing to land our lady passengers was a melancholy job. They seemed very unwilling to leave the ship when the time arrived, but realised how impossible it was for them to accompany the *Anna Lombard* to the hunting-grounds of the great sperm whale; so they gave us their blessing and stepped into the shore launch which took them to the landing, Mrs. Lombard's one regret being that no whale hunt had been staged which might have placed her in No. 3 whaleboat.

I obtained permission to spend a few hours ashore as this was my first visit to Buenos Ayres, and I put in the time roaming through the streets. At the time of which I write it was not the magnificent commercial centre of modern times. Steve Finlay, our engineer, who had been there several times since 1865, aptly described it as an Italianised Paris-Madrid. Every vice that the old world had grown tired of had been re-established here. Revolutions seemed to have become hardy annuals. It was the fluctuation of the coinage which caused most of the trouble, until a stable government became possible some years later.

The old city, or business portion, was simply a criss-cross of narrow streets converging off one central square. The houses appeared to be of Spanish-Mexican type of architecture of the early eighteenth century and resembled each other in size and structure in tiresome monotony. If questioned concerning the narrow streets when almost unlimited empty space existed on the outskirts of the town, the citizen would reply that a maximum of shade was obtained. Indeed, some thoroughfares had a row of tall lime-trees planted down the middle, having a most cooling effect in the heat of the summer.



We did not remain in Argentine waters very long, but hoisted in our boats and prepared to ride out a Pompario (as the great wind is called) which comes down from the Andes with hurricane force, sweeping everything before it. For three days the storm lasted. Some ships in the anchorage broke away, but we held fast. During this period my time was spent mainly in the sail-room, as the main 'tween decks had come to be called. We were assisted by the Pirate, our Maltese-Scotsman, who was a great favourite in the fo'c'sle. On first acquaintance he appeared to be rather low in the social scale, but he proved to be exceedingly clever, possessing a working knowledge of the English, French and German languages. His mind seemed always to be above the heights of an ordinary sailor. He was greatly influenced by the writers of Greek history and traditions, and those three days spent in making a new mainsail were indeed enjoyable, for Peter Haskell and the Pirate discussed Greek literature during the period of storm and wind. Their conversation was exceedingly interesting. The Pirate was able to discuss academical classics and at the same time stitch canvas which necessitated great care and accurateness. The mate, with a piece of sail-cloth stretched across his knees, would move his fingers rapidly, guiding his needle along the sailmaker's line as he sewed cloth to cloth, silently listening to a common sailor expounding the theory concerning the possibility of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* being composite works and not the creation of one author.

Peter Haskell was in favour of the Pirate's idea, for he pointed out many inconsistent details of style and

matter, and the linking together of a series of seemingly irrelevant episodes which confirmed the theory of separate authorship, a controversy which at that time was splitting Greek scholars into two camps. The sail-maker and I were silent listeners. As far as I was concerned, I had forgotten all the wonderful stories of the heroes of a former civilisation, for my education in this direction had been sadly neglected. The struggle for existence had not led me into pastures where knowledge of classical literature was in any way necessary. My subsequent study of Greek literature has convinced me that *Morto Antonio*, better known to Lombardians as the "Pirate," was a most extraordinary person—a self-educated man who by accident had stumbled upon a translation of Homer which whetted his curiosity and stimulated his desire for learning so much that he had taken to sea on many long voyages more books than clothing. As for the mate, my opinion of him, formed upon first acquaintance, was confirmed many times over. I subsequently gathered that in his early life he had graduated at Berlin and Vienna universities. But let me record this fact concerning the dear old gentleman. He was no stickler for the rigid class distinction that is so well defined on ship-board, any further than was necessary for the safe navigation and discipline of the ship. He would converse by the hour with his men, but always with the object of mind development and self-education, inspiring them with a desire for self-improvement. As soon as he discovered the Pirate's leaning towards classical literature, he gave him the freedom of his bookcase. It was no unusual sight to see our Maltese devouring the English translations of *Simonides*, the beautiful

writer of the heroes of Thermopylæ, or the works of Pindar.

Casey, as usual bubbling over with mirth and good humour, one day remarked:

"Mr. Mate, sir, let me talk or I shall bust for sure. Niver in me life have I sailed in such a ship. Niver did I see a sailorman reading sich stuff as our Maltese Scotty reads. 'Tain't natural. An empty sea-chest and a 'ead full of learning are two very bad things for a sailorman."

I smiled at Casey's attempt to ridicule his shipmate, and questioned: "Why should a sailorman not improve his mind?"

"Sure now," returned Casey with a laugh. "On all other ships in which I have sailed, a sailor was not permitted to 'ave a mind to improve."

"But why should a sailor be content to always live under these conditions?" I asked with a smile.

"For the same reason that millions of people are content to live in slum districts of great cities; mostly from ignorance, strikes me, Mr. Hedger, sir," returned the Irishman deliberately; and that echoed the sentiment of the carpenter, Ivan Domeroff, for he once said, while discussing the same question: "Once clear the mind of the sailor of superstition, the bucko mate and brutal skipper will vanish for ever."

We lay in the anchorage off Buenos Ayres for several days after the storm, for the bad weather had interrupted our task of disembarking the passengers' luggage, which was considerable, as the ladies were to make their home in the Argentine capital (where they were to be the guests of Captain Lombard's eldest daughter, whose husband was Port medical officer)

until the return of the *Anna Lombard* six or eight months hence.

With a fair wind and all sail aloft we left the anchorage and, three days later, entered the South Atlantic with a spanking breeze which gradually fell light after a day or so of rapid progress. During the following fourteen days, calms and variables and contrary winds tried our patience exceedingly, and much discussion arose concerning the use of the pinnace for towing purposes. So one calm morning the boat was lowered and the towing-bars bolted into position across the cabin top and cockpit. At sunset that day, after ten hours' towing, it was found that we could make an average of six knots on a small consumption of coal in the long ocean swell then prevailing. A consultation was held one evening in the saloon as to whether we should negotiate the Straits of Magellan or venture round Cape Horn. Certainly it was not the time of year to weather "Cape Stiff" for preference, for the Antarctic Ocean is not the choicest place in the world during mid-winter months. But I remember once making the passage of the Horn with royals and light stay-sails aloft, sailing as though in some landlocked harbour with the sea as calm and unruffled as old Father Thames, influenced by midsummer breezes, and that was in July.

To go through the Straits of Magellan had always been my great desire, but I realised how difficult such a passage would be at this time of year, in view of the fogs and snowstorms which generally prevail in winter. However, it was decided to take the risk, so we shaped our course for Cape Virgins.

The Magellan route as compared with that of Cape

Horn is not only a short road into the Pacific Ocean, cutting off the islands to the south of the continent, but also ensured calm waters, instead of the stupendous seas of the Antarctic. For a sailing-ship the difficulties are many. The prevailing wind is from the west, and there is no space for a large vessel to beat up against it, nor does she obtain the advantage to be gained from any slight change of wind. Outside, the gale may vary a point or so, but within the channel it always blows straight down, as in a gully. This difficulty was overcome by early mariners, by the strength of their crews. In cases of dire necessity they lowered their boats and towed the ship. We in the *Anna Lombard* would use the steam-pinnacle for that purpose; thus we would be spared the terrors of a Cape Horn buster and the chances of being blown farther south.

I was exceedingly disappointed in my first sight of Cape Virgins, for I had visions of snowclad mountains and a country inhabited by a race of savage giants. Why, I could not tell. The picture that met my gaze consisted mainly of low cliffs, behind which were miles and miles of rolling bush and snow-covered plains. That is Cape Virgins, the name given to the promontory by Magellan, who, on October 21, 1519, first saw the channel opening to the west. It was the day of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, and, like the good Catholic that he was, he gave the point of land that name.

It is said that in 1578 Drake went through the Straits to the Pacific Ocean, where he thought to fight the Spanish. In this newly discovered ocean he took sixteen days to accomplish the journey. But he was blown back on the Pacific side towards Cape Horn, and was the first to discover that there existed another

route farther south, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Hitherto, navigators had believed that the land extended to the South Pole.

A fine breeze from the E.N.E. carried us well into the channel as we bore up for Cape Virgins under easy sail. My mind went back to those tiny ships of the first adventurers who saw the land. In all the three hundred years that had passed, the land could not have changed so very much. *The Golden Hinde*, *The Pelican* of 120 tons and the *Elizabeth* of only 80 tons were not very formidable craft to venture upon such a voyage. Here were we, in a 1,000-ton ship, following in the wake of our ancestors, with one of the N.Z. Shipping Co.'s steamers rapidly approaching from the West, while on our starboard bow appeared an American steamer that could carry the whole of Drake's fleet on her main deck.

We dropped anchor to the north-east of the first narrows in the western limit of Possession Bay and lay there for the night, during which time two large steamers passed. Next morning, as the wind continued fair, we hove anchor and stood through the narrows with the steam-pinnace ready for lowering at a moment's notice should the wind fall light. The current here was rather strong and set towards the Atlantic, and it reduced our mileage considerably. Fortunately the wind freshened, and we sailed comfortably into St. Jago Bay, ready to negotiate the second narrows; but the wind fell light and a sprinkling of snow fell, so the pinnace was requisitioned and we towed the ship to an anchorage.

Here the country is reputed to be inhabited by a tribe of Indians who hunt the rhea—or South Ameri-

can ostrich. The doctors wanted to land for a few hours' sport, but Captain Lombard told them that not many months before, some people who landed from an Argentine steamer were attacked by the natives, who resented their killing the rhea. Furthermore, as the glass was rising for a change, he did not advise landing. Much as I would like to have landed, I saw the wisdom of the Captain's words. Under the light of a brilliant moon the ship was towed through the second narrows, and then the storm burst. Seven miles south-west of the second narrows lies Elizabeth Island, so named by Drake. It was here we rode out the storm of snow and sleet resembling an Antarctic blizzard.

"How loyal those old navigators were!" said Mr. Richester, as he and I surveyed the chart, taking off the courses and distances, ready to resume our journey when the weather permitted. "I wonder how many points of land on this continent have been named after Royalty?"

"Or after some famous saint?" I added with a smile. "Have you been through the Straits before, Mr. Richester?"

"Yes," he said sadly, "to my sorrow. For thirteen months I camped over the hills there" (pointing out a promontory which showed white and desolate in the evening twilight). "I was in charge of a coaling-station at a place called Punta Arenas, and it was about the loneliest existence any man could experience. The place was only a collection of huts, a long corrugated-iron shed called a store, a great dump of coal, a few barges and several Indian wigwams and shelters, with a population of some one hundred and fifty people, dozens of stray dogs and a few pigs. Had it not been

for the few steamers that stopped for coal, I'm sure I would have died of dry rot. Then the war broke out between Chile and Peru, so I got away on a New Zealand steamer, and the coal business went to hell for all I cared. It was either clear out or go stark raving mad, and I preferred the former, so I got out and never wish to land in Patagonia again."

We lay in this anchorage for over a week, and I began to think the passage round the Horn may have been better after all. But the weather cleared again, so, having obtained a good supply of firewood from several logs of uprooted pine-trees discovered on the beach, we resumed our journey, this time traversing the remainder of the Straits and Patagonian channels, which was the most fascinating part of the voyage. The whole of this portion of South America is a bewildering labyrinth of waterways and islands. Fresh passages open up from every point of view. In those days there was little guidance apart from the wrecks of ships and crude landmarks erected by castaways. Such charts as existed had been made by early navigators—ours was by the officers of the *Beagle*. Many of the waterways had never been explored, and I had a desire to explore them. The numerous sounds and snow-covered canyons clothed with forest down to the very water's edge simply fascinated me. The mountains here do not rise much over five thousand feet, for this is the tail-end of the Andes, which are partly submerged. The depths were great, being in some places four thousand feet, according to our chart, and the only places where it was possible to anchor were in certain little bays. One of the harbours in which we anchored was called Sunbeam Bay. When we landed



to secure a load of firewood one cold wintry afternoon we saw the name "Sunbeam 1876" recorded on a piece of timber, so we likewise recorded the name of our ship on a tree close by, and I expect it is there to this day, if the timber has not decayed.

One of these tiny bays we called "The Lombardians' Picnic Cove." It happened this way. A strong westerly wind was blowing out in the channel, but in the cove all was calm and still. The beach before the anchorage was a stretch of golden sand about half a mile long, fringed on the landward side by a clump of pines, behind which rose great cliffs of prodigious height. Several men were selected from each watch to land, and very soon the silent atmosphere was broken by the ring of axe and saw. At midday the stewards' staff conveyed the men's dinner on shore and a very enjoyable picnic was held. At the end of the day several cords of firewood, cut into suitable lengths for the furnace of the pinnace, were stacked on the beach ready for shipment. This went on for three days. On a piece of sawn timber cut deep into the wood Joe Splendid carved the words "Lombardians' Picnic Cove." Many years after I read an account of a survey party landing at this cove, and they reported that the board was still standing in a good state of preservation.

The firewood enabled us to conserve our coal, for having entered the western half of the Straits we thought it possible we might do a considerable amount of towing ere we reached the Pacific. It subsequently transpired that our longest tow was from Fortescue Bay to Point Angosto. Here the channel is extremely narrow. Captain Lombard occupied the cockpit of the pinnace the whole time during towing hours, and I

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found him a very interesting companion, for he had been through the Straits on several occasions and was conversant with many of the principal landmarks. One extraordinary feature of the journey to the Pacific was the almost unprecedented spell of fine weather. Apparently this region had so far escaped the winter snow, and as yet we had encountered none of the famous fogs. The many forest streams and waterfalls suggested rain in plenty on the higher levels, and Captain Lombard remarked upon this phenomenon. He pointed out a spot on the mainland side where he was once shipwrecked in a small barque called the *Repentance*. His story may be of interest to the reader. It is recorded in my log-book as the Captain's story of a ship wrecked to satisfy the whim of a woman.

"The *Repentance* left the roadstead of Antofagasta with a load of nitrate for London in September, 1842. She was owned and commanded by a West-of-England man, Flanders by name. He was a bad-tempered, sour-faced man about fifty-two years of age. Flanders knew no more about navigation than a bank clerk does of a steam-engine, but we crawled about the world in a happy-go-lucky way, under the guidance of the mate and the skipper's wife, who could take the sun and find a longitude with any male navigator. During the journey southward Mrs. Flanders conceived the idea that she would like to see Patagonia and Terra-del-Fuego, so we coasted along the Gulf of Penas, sighting the islands of the west, gradually working down the coast to Wellington Island until we sighted Cape Pillar, husband and wife quarrelling all the time about courses and distances. All went well until we entered the narrows, when a north-westerly gale drove us high and

dry on the beach at Point Tamer on the mainland side. Fortunately, the huge seas drove the ship on to the only stretch of sandy beach in the vicinity. She was simply caught up as by a tidal wave and thrown on the beach, where her bottom stove in, sending the top-hamper down with a terrific crash and we lay on our beam ends, swept from end to end by the angry combers. In the darkness it was impossible to see what damage was done, but next morning when I ventured to unleash myself from my place of safety, I was startled by the ruin that greeted me. We lay quite near a high cliff—a solid wall of granite. Had we hit it, we would have been dashed to atoms. I often wonder how it was we managed to escape. Mrs. Flanders had secured herself inside the cabin scuttle-butt, and when I found her she was sound asleep, rolled in her husband's watch-coat. The Captain lay in his bunk, drunk, with an empty whisky bottle beside him, oblivious to the desolation and ruin awaiting him when he awoke. The mate was locked in his room and the door had to be broken open before he could get out. The cook and his galley had landed during the night. We saw the nigger cook several yards away, seated on the beach, sadly contemplating the wreck of his kitchen. Mrs. Flanders called to her husband, but he was too comfortable, so she turned to me and said, "Sonny (that was my name in the *Repentance*), Sonny, go and rouse the men out." I struggled forward along the top sides, scrambling over the wreck of the fallen masts and yards, but I managed to reach the forecastle, where I found only the carpenter and two seamen. The others had either landed or had been washed overboard during the night. When I returned aft I found Mrs. Flanders seated in the star-

board mizzen chains, now fully alive to the seriousness of our misfortune, weeping bitterly. Presently her husband scrambled through the scuttle, and high words arose.

"'Look where your fancy navigation has landed us,' she said excitedly. 'Didn't I tell you that you had given the man at the wheel the wrong course?'

"The skipper gazed vacantly round, a foolish, almost insane look coming into his eyes. Then he turned upon her savagely and replied:

"'You wanted to see Patagonia, so here you are. You have only to walk on shore and take your fill. I'm going to Terra-del-Fuego.' He calmly drew a pistol from his pocket, placed it to his head, pulled the trigger and tumbled backwards into the sea. Mrs. Flanders watched his corpse until it vanished in a receding wave. She was unmoved, for presently her lips curled in a sneer and, turning towards the mate, who had climbed over the taff-rail at the sound of the shot, she said, as she pointed to the rolling, tumbling surf below:

"'He's gone. A fitting end to the greatest fool that ever commanded a ship.'

"It was the coolest and most heartless action I had ever seen, and the tragedy had a wonderful effect upon me for many years after. That woman was the most unfeeling creature of my acquaintance. She took charge with the iron hand of a despot; she organised our camp, and under her direction we salvaged many useful articles from the wreck and made ourselves fairly comfortable in tents and shelters under the headland. The second mate and his watch must have been washed overboard by the great seas, for we never saw them again, so we were only seven persons all told, and for

two months we carved out an existence under the despotic rule of Mrs. Flanders. We were rescued by a Peruvian schooner and taken to Valparaiso, where I shipped once more for home, this time going round Cape Horn."

There was more sea room after leaving the anchorage at Angosto, so the pinnacle was secured to the davits and under easy sail we took advantage of the southerly wind and made for the roadstead of Churruca. The scenery here was truly magnificent. We were weather-bound in this anchorage for several days, during which time Peter Haskell and I went away in the pinnacle to a point beyond the headland, called Felix Point, to investigate the channel. A little description of the Glacier Gorge will not be out of place here. I select from my log-book the most interesting passages. Though so many years have passed since that memorable voyage, I often find myself recalling the wonders of that charming spot, which in my humble opinion rivals the Fiords of Norway. Future generations will witness their exploitation by shipping companies who cater for the tourist and the wealthy globe-trotter.

The Churruca anchorage is nearly a mile long. The high cliffs stand straight up from the water, opening in a narrow gully, the entrance to which is some two hundred yards in width. The cliffs on either hand are clothed by tree-fern and undergrowth of many shades of green and brown. Above is a barren crag, where splashes of white suggested snow on the high levels. The gorge ends in a dark precipice. Above it rises a mountain peak; a glacier descending, perhaps ages and ages ago, had been arrested in its descent and overhung the precipice, standing out in relief as though cut,

or placed there by the hand of man, and forming part of a tremendous wall of ice and snow suspended, as it were, in mid-air. The lower cliffs with their overhanging strata sheltered flocks of nesting sea-birds.

In a burst of winter sunshine we weighed anchor once more and stood into the mid-channel, and with wind abeam headed for Cape Pillar, where the southern portion of the Straits of Magellan enters the Pacific Ocean. During the morning a large steamer came up behind us, creeping inshore and hugging the deep channel on the mainland side. Evidently she was making for the northern channel; as she showed no flags we did not speak to her. We must have been an object of interest to her crowd of passengers, for after clearing Felix Point we crowded on all sail, making for the open sea.

Whoever named the island on our port side Desolation Island gave it a very appropriate name, for the land rose gaunt and barren and black. Not even a sea-bird relieved the monotony of the black and yellow hills and grey-faced cliffs, whose summits were snowclad and icebound.

As we neared Cape Pillar, the extreme northern point, Peter Haskell pointed out the famous landmark—the two peaks, of which the western one is so much like a pillar. He said: "That is Magellan's Cape Desgado. It was Sir John Narborough who called the promontory Cape Pillar."

As the sun reached the western horizon we bade farewell to the desolate coast of Patagonia, and I had only one regret—that we had seen no sign of natives of either Patagonia or Terra-del-Fuego.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PAKEHA MAORI

THE *Anna Lombard*, being in splendid trim, made every use of the strong southerly wind, racing northward in fine style. It was evident that Captain Lombard did not fear to carry sail, for in his endeavour to reach warmer climates and the sporting-grounds of the great whale, he crowded on all sail, severely testing the staying powers of the old ship and driving her through the water at a terrific pace, sometimes logging twelve knots. The ship seemed to enter into the spirit of the race, for she bounded forward like a thing of life, as though glad to be released from the landlocked waters of the straits; glad once more to find unlimited sea room. Everyone on board was extremely enthusiastic about her sailing powers. Every fibre of her structure vibrated in harmony with her easy motion, and we knew that hurricanes and cyclones held no terror for the staunch old *Anna Lombard*.

It was during this run through the "roaring forties," as these latitudes are called, that Ark Royd told me a little of his romantic career. Of all the crew, this man had crowded into his sixty-seven years more adventure than usually falls to the lot of a common sailor. Indeed, the romantic elements surrounding his birth are a story of conditions which mark the establishment of British commerce in the Antipodes, and the inaugura-

tion of a Dominion which is known to the present generation as the Britain of the South, the brightest jewel in the crown of Empire. To the student of this period of the nineteenth century the story of how Ark Royd's father landed in New Zealand may be of interest.

"It was in the year 1820 that my father, then a man of thirty-five years, drifted to New Zealand," said Ark, as he leaned over the poop rail in a meditative mood. "In his younger days he had joined the royal navy, first as a clerk at the Admiralty Office in London, then being selected as a writer to the battleship *Victory*. He was slightly wounded in the Battle of Trafalgar and retired from the navy very soon after, joining his father in London, where for a time he worked as a fellmonger. When his father died he purchased a small barque, seeking his fortune by trading to New Zealand. He had heard of the wonderful fortunes made by certain trading captains in the much-talked-of, proposed colony of the south. He secretly laid his plans, shipping a cargo of useful articles for trading purposes, then, engaging a crew, he set off on his journey. His cargo was composed of European clothing, guns and ammunition, mirrors and highly coloured cloth, nails and poultry. It was a strange mixture, but these articles were eagerly sought by the natives, who would give in exchange a very fine flax much superior to American or Indian flax. Then in this wonderful country there was to be obtained a valuable green jade which the natives used for making various weapons of warfare, tools and domestic implements. Then there was a beautiful gum which could be gathered in plenty from the giant trees called kauri-trees. The saplings of this kauri were much sought after by the masters of



whaling-ships and traders for their ships' spars. Indeed, a prosperous trade between New Zealand and Port Jackson in Australia had been flourishing for many years—kauri spars fetched a big price at Port Jackson. Extreme caution was advised in dealing with the natives, as on the slightest provocation they would attack a ship and overwhelm the crew, burning the ship for her iron and copper fastenings, and often feasting upon the flesh of the crew.

"My father had no fear of these things," said Ark Royd proudly. "He was a very powerful, well-set-up man, standing six-foot-three in his bare feet. He had a strong personality and ruled his men with an iron will, at the same time being the very manifestation of goodness, and greatly respected by all who knew him. Indeed, he was spoken of with pride by certain native chiefs as the Pakeha who overcame Onetiki, one of the greatest fighting-men of a branch of the Arawa tribe of northern Maoris.

"I must tell you that in those days the vessels trading on the coast were compelled to place boarding nettings on the outside of the ship, that is, from the bulwarks to the tops. Trading with the natives was no yachting trip; it was an undertaking which necessitated caution and skill. Many Sydney schooners had been destroyed during the first few years because of the misunderstandings that often arose with the natives. The arrogant old beach-combers and greedy traders could not, or would not, understand the meaning of the word 'Tapu,' the violation of which was often the cause of much bloodshed, especially after the superstition concerning the origin of the white man had been eradicated from the minds of the Maoris, who supposed the first white

men to be visitors from the spirit world. The lust for money and anything that could be converted into cash, the disregard for native conventions and religious rites, the enticing of women to the ships, and the frequent quarrels amongst themselves quickly opened the eyes of the Maoris to the fact that the white traders were not emissaries from the spirit world, and for many years open warfare existed.

"In my time," continued Royd thoughtfully, "I can remember a brig of 250 tons being burnt to the water's edge by my tribe. Although my father was recognised as a great Rangatira in the tribe, he was powerless to prevent the destruction of the ship whose crew had overstepped the bonds of friendship by inducing women of the tribe to visit the ship.

"As I told you, my father arrived on the coast of New Zealand in the year 1820, and gradually progressed down the coast by easy stages, his original intention being to seek a tribe that inhabited the banks of the Tamaki River, having been recommended to take this course by a fellow-trader he had met while crossing the Tasman Sea. When he arrived in the Hauraki Gulf a powerful chief induced him to anchor his ship and sojourn with them for a time. The chief gave him to understand that plenty of flax was made ready by his people in exchange for the white men's guns. The old chieftain gained my father's confidence by a show of unusual hospitality and manifestations of friendship. The attitude of the women towards the white men was all that could be desired until one of the sailors enticed the daughter of a certain famous warrior into the fo'c'sle by the offer of some showy garment, and I leave to your imagination the sequence.

During the night the ship was taken by surprise. Hundreds of natives, under cover of a moonless sky, stole out and cut away the netting, overpowering the watch. All the crew, with the exception of my father and the mate, were killed. These two put up such a fight that the chief ordered them to be spared. The lady who had been the cause of the trouble claimed the mate as her own. She took him into the forest and was not heard of for some years to come.

"My father witnessed all the horrors of the subsequent feast, imagining that he would be the next victim, but a certain chieftainess had her eyes upon him, and after a speech, lasting some hours, it was decided that as he was a great Rangatira amongst his own people, his life be spared on condition that he meet Onetiki in open combat. This proposition was put to my father by signs and signals. The great Onetiki, the unvanquished fighter of the tribe, was presented for his inspection, and it was arranged that the combat should take place with the rising of the morrow's sun.

"The scene of the fight was a tiny clearing on the shores of the Hauraki Gulf, where the waves of the ocean beat upon the golden sand in full view of that barren, rocky, volcanic island named Rangitoto. In 1839 I was shown the spot by an old man of the tribe who had witnessed the fight, and from whom I obtained the details.

"Long before daylight the chief's daughter, Huhana, visited my father where he lay a prisoner, followed by Te Mate, the old man before mentioned. He had learned to speak a little English, and told my father that the victor would be permitted to take the chief's daugh-

ter for his wife. When at last daylight came and he beheld the beautiful Huhana, my father decided he would overcome his opponent, but when he beheld the terrible Onetiki standing nude upon the open beach, his heart sank. After an almost endless discourse among the leading men of the tribe, the combat commenced. My father, Captain Royd, put forth all his skill and training to gain the upper hand, and for a while the contest progressed in silence, not a murmur arising from the crowd. Presently my father threw Onetiki, who lay for a moment half-stunned, much to the surprise of his fellows. Then they met again, first my father, then Onetiki being uppermost, until with one supreme effort my father sprang a skilful trick upon Onetiki, catching him round the middle and forcing him back, while the tribesmen droned a mournful dirge. Back, back, he thrust him. In the grip of the white man Onetiki was helpless. Back, ever back, with eyes and tongue protruding, striving and straining to gain the mastery, but powerless in the grip which held him. Then something snapped. It was his spine, and the great Onetiki collapsed in a heap on the sand at my father's feet."

Ark Royd was evidently very proud of this episode, for his eyes shone as he recited the details of the fight. For a while he was silent, as if searching his memory for further particulars.

"Te Mate told me many years after," he continued, "that the silence that followed was the silence of death. The astonished Maoris expected to see the Pakeha slay the prostrate Onetiki, but he only stood on the sand astride his vanquished opponent, his nude flesh shining like a stone statute, fully prepared for a fresh onslaught. But it did not come. No one cared to venture, even

though the victor was wellnigh exhausted. Huhana rose from the midst of her attendant women and ran to the victorious white man, seizing his hand. Then, with head thrown back proudly, she extended her disengaged hand to the sky, addressing her people in a long speech, gesticulating wildly first to the white man and then to the fallen native. At her bidding a slave approached and placed a mat woven of flax and feathers round my father's body. Then he was led to the water's edge, where lay one of his ship's boats with all equipment complete. Unarmed warriors supported him to the boat, while others carried food and water in strange calabashes. He was gently assisted into the boat, the natives still seated in a semicircle chanting some ancient incantation, which Te Mate afterwards told me was an invocation to Io or Atua, for by overcoming Onetiki it was supposed that my father possessed supernatural powers.

"My father had sufficient strength to step the mast and hoist the sail; then the natives, all smiling, pushed the boat into deep water, only too pleased to see the great fighter quit their shores. Being at a loss which way to steer (for he had neither chart nor compass), he held out his arms in supplication to the woman. Huhana seemed to guess his meaning, for she waded into the sea, climbed over the stern and pointed to a distant island that stood out in the morning sun. The whole of the tribe then gathered at the edge of the water, not one attempting to launch a canoe to intercept the voyagers, but loud were their lamentations at the departure of the beautiful Huhana.

"For a period of three years they lived together on the outlying island of the gulf, the native name of

which is Aotea, but now commonly known as the Great Barrier. Then Huhana grew restless for her people, for Te Mate had visited them from time to time and had reported the death of her father. At last my father decided that his wife and child should return, for by her father's death my mother was now the lawful chieftainess. For several years the tribe prospered under her rule, my father being a very useful medium between the Maori and the white trader. He even induced a missionary to establish his headquarters at our pah—or village—and he lived with us until the end. I was the first pupil in his school.

"Then a tribe of fierce warriors from the north swept through our land, bringing death and desolation. I was eight years of age, and can just remember the dreadful fight. My mother and father were very happy, and my mother's tribesmen held my father in great respect, for his victory over Onetiki was still remembered and talked of. Te Mate told me that the fame of that exploit had spread from north to south. At this time many Maoris had been converted to the new faith of the missionary, and that was the most peaceful period of the tribe's history." He paused for a while and gazed aloft, then took a turn or two up and down the deck. Presently he rejoined me and continued:

"The night of the massacre I was caught up from my bed by the strong arms of the missionary, Mr. William Brash, and hurried to a canoe, for a trading-ship had appeared in the offing, and Mr. Brash implored the Captain to put to sea immediately, for both my father and mother had been killed. I was taken to Sydney and placed in the care of some friends of Mr. Brash, who attended to my education. I afterwards

met several members of my tribe who had escaped the slaughter, and it was because of them I was able to speak my native tongue so fluently. At the age of eighteen I was influenced by that restless, roaming spirit inherited from my father, and I longed to visit the land of my birth. I had been educated by the missionaries in Sydney with the idea of some day becoming an ordained minister to carry the gospel of Christianity to my mother's people, but as I grew older I resented this.

"In the early part of 1839 I arrived in Auckland, then a tiny straggling village on the banks of the Waitemata harbour. I had full directions where to find my native village, so I made my way along the shore of the gulf to the spot indicated. It was not the same bush-covered country of my childhood, for here and there the forest had been cleared and the houses of white men had replaced the whares of my tribesmen. On the banks of a creek, I saw some Maori huts, and from some pipi gatherers received the information that one Te Mate, an old man of a former tribe, lived a little way along the coast in a whare built in a grove of Pohutukawas. He cultivated a kumara, or sweet potato patch, supplementing his meagre food supply with pipis from the seashore. When I found him he lay before the door of his hut in the glorious summer sunshine, gazing out to sea at the faint outline of haze which concealed from his view the distant island that was the island of my birth. His old and emaciated limbs were wrapped in the folds of a blanket, while on the sand at his feet lay an ancient mat of hand-woven flax and beside him lay his green-stone mere. I sat beside him and spoke the language of his people, and when he heard that almost-forgotten tongue his age seemed to

fall away from him and he wept aloud. He caught my hand and called me Ark, the name my mother gave me. He told me how he had hidden in the bush behind the village, that nearly all the tribe had been killed by the bloodthirsty natives from the north, and that he alone, of all the inhabitants of the village, now remained. He told me how the white man's government had taken possession of nearly all the land. Nearly every ship that sailed into the gulf brought new settlers, and many natives had become rich trading with the white man. He also told me that the adjoining tribesmen were usurpers of the land which once belonged to my mother's people, and which was by right of inheritance mine. Then he led me to the spot where the historic combat between my father and Onetiki had taken place, and I bowed my head in silence. I am sure the spirits of my mother and father were there on the beach beside me. I felt as though I wanted to proclaim the spot Tapu. But I was destined in after years to see that place the site of a white man's home; a seaside bungalow, and his little children building castles with the sand, and my heart rebelled at the sacrilegious march of time and the introduction of new people and modes of life. My mother's country no longer held a charm for me. I had satisfied my curiosity, and realised that on my mother's side I belonged to a fast-declining race, but on my father's side to a race of world-wide rulers.

"My education and residence in Sydney caused me to wish to see my father's country. Mr. Brash had told me that my father's people lived in London and were very wealthy, so I proceeded to England at the first opportunity. But here again I received a shock, for my relatives refused to see me. It was my colour.



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They told me that my father had forfeited his right to respectability by living with a black woman. He could no longer be a member of the Royd family whose long line of ancestors had kept the name untarnished. The son of a cannibal chieftainess was certainly most unwelcome. In a letter I wrote them before leaving England I severely criticised their view of my father's marriage. I told them that in my veins flowed the blood of kings and rulers of a fighting people of whom I was very proud. Even though many of them may have been eaters of human flesh, it must be remembered that Nature had placed them on an island devoid of animal life, and the art of tilling the soil had not been discovered by them. Morally, I consider my mother's people far superior to my father's. The women of my mother's people had never been known to sell their virtue for gold. Women of my father's race think little of this. The men-folk of my mother's people will die fighting for their rights and the maintenance of their honour; my father's people will even sell their honour for gold. I severely condemned the poverty and selfishness of the English people, and when my letter was despatched, I shipped in a South Sea whaler, and I've been sailorising ever since."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE FIRST WHALE HUNT

WE continued to make good headway to the northward, but gradually the wind lost its freshness, and as the temperature rose the wind settled down to a steady seven-knot breeze, which was more comfortable, although quite unusual at this time of the year in the roaring forties.

July was well-nigh exhausted and we were approaching a time of the year when, as Captain Lombard expected, great herds of migrating sperm whale lingered in the tropics or subtropical regions. Every preparation for the whale hunt was commenced. Boats' equipment and cutting-out staging was handed up from the 'tween decks; harpoons fitted to their staves, lances polished and placed in readiness in each whaleboat. A sharp look-out was kept in the crow's-nest in keen anticipation.

The medical staff showed signs of discontent. Had I a better knowledge of the German language I might have gathered many interesting details about the purpose of the expedition, for almost daily disputes and heated debates took place in my hearing, which aroused vague suspicions of coming trouble. The charthouse was usually selected for these discussions, the doctors, the Professor and the ship's officers (with the exception of your humble servant the third mate) all taking

part. As Peter Haskell's aide-de-camp I was always placed in charge of the deck when these scientific discussions arose, which was usually during the second dog watch. During the working hours of the day, if sea and weather permitted, the scientific staff would be engaged in the laboratory, the closed apartment next to the engine-room. The doors of this chamber had been barricaded with timber,\* the only means of gaining entrance being through the carpenter's cabin. Ivan Domeroff occupied a roomy berth at the forward part of the deckhouse, and he was the only member of the ship's crew who was allowed to enter the apartment.

At dawn on the 22nd August we first sighted whales, and commenced in earnest the purpose of the voyage. When the cry "Blow-O" was heard, that long-expected announcement which had been hovering in our minds for the past five months, a death-like silence ensued. All seemed to wonder if the man aloft was indeed in earnest.

"Blow-O, blow-O, blow-O! Sperm whale ahead!" shouted the look-out.

True to old traditions, Captain Lombard could smell sperm whale in his sleep, for he came running up the companion-way and on to the poop deck, clad in pyjamas, and joyfully gave the order "Away whalers!" Then he placed his binoculars to his eyes; but I saw them without the aid of glasses, sporting and blowing faint jets of moisture skyward, and my soul was alight with eagerness.

There was no confusion in this well-regulated ship, every man being schooled and drilled in his duty. Davits were lowered and boats touched the water in a twinkling. Swinging booms were triced out at right

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angles, giving support to cutting-out stages which were rigged on either side of the ship.

I was in charge of No. 3 whaleboat, which means that I was harpooner, while Casey was boat-steerer. Four stalwart oarsmen, and my crew was complete. As soon as the boat touched the water the stroke oarsman and the bowman smartly unhooked the tackle-blocks, the rest of the crew swarming down the falls stepped the masts and hoisted the sail, while Casey steered clear of the ship. All this may seem confusing to the landsman, as it no doubt did to our medical staff who looked calmly on. The three boats spread out fan-wise and made for the horizon, where several whales could be seen in the morning sunlight. The Captain's boat, which was to windward, seemed to be leading. It was then I discovered that my whaleboat was a very bad sailer. As youngest charge-hand, I had been detailed to act as reserve boat in the forthcoming attack, and my crew much resented the fact that the second mate's boat got fast to a monster which started off into the teeth of the wind like a shot. I saw the Captain's boat luff up into the wind and the Pirate, harpooner of No. 1, prepare to drive. I wondered why, for not far away I could see the spout of two whales blowing small jets of steam. Presently the Pirate let fly his harpoon, and immediately a great commotion of rising white water commenced round the Captain's boat, which told me that something was amiss.

"Hard-a-port, Casey, let her go off," said I, and we made for the scene of trouble. I was somewhat excited, for I realised that a bad beginning had been made. The Pirate had attached a calf, whereas he should have kept his harpoon for the dam. I could see the

huge monster go flying in the teeth of the wind, and as she skimmed the water I knew she was bent on returning to the rescue of her babe, which was making frantic efforts to shake off the deadly harpoon. Over and over the small whale rolled, lashing the water, diving and rising, springing out of the water and causing such a commotion as I had never before witnessed. As we danced over the water I kept my eye on the flying dam. I could see her making attempts to turn, lashing the sea with her fins and tail. She paused as though to regain breath before gathering speed for the onslaught. We were now directly in her path, so I ordered the mast to be unshipped, and my crew were quickly laying on their oars, fully alert to the danger that confronted us. I stood with harpoon poised, knowing full well that if I missed someone was going to lose the number of his mess. On rushed the infuriated mother, anxious to rescue her babe from the hunters.

"Steady, Casey," I breathed. "Port a little. Steady, boy! Now! Hard over!" and my harpoon flew through the air, burying itself in the side of the whale as she rushed by with mouth wide open. The line flew out as my crew backed away. I saw the Captain stand up to wave his hand to us, but the mother whale claimed my attention. She had evidently changed her mind about destroying the skipper's boat. She sounded; down, down she went. One tub of line was quickly emptied and the second commenced its journey. It surged round the bollard until the sparks flew. The baby whale, which was no more than about twenty feet long, now lay dead with the sea washing over it, like a floating log upon which numbers of screaming sea-birds perched. The

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Captain's boat lay motionless some distance away, waiting the return of the dam. The second mate's boat, about three miles to windward, was towing its catch toward the ship from which the pinnace put off to its assistance.

Presently a shower of blood and water was sent into the air and fell just clear of us, but nearly swamped the skipper's boat. The dam had come to the surface between the boats, where she lay thrashing the water as if undecided which to attack. First she turned to us, and I prepared another harpoon to meet the onslaught; then she turned to No. 1. She then spouted blood and red water, and I knew the end was near. If she sounded again, we might lose her, and she was a monster, eighty-four feet, if an inch. To approach meant sudden death to all, so we gathered in the slack line, the oarsman preparing to back away at the least sign of movement on her part.

Then she saw her calf and the thrashing tail stopped, which was the skipper's chance. His boat gradually moved forward while we continued to haul ourselves closer by taking in the slack of the line, keeping the axe ready to cut away at a moment's notice. The mother gradually drew near to her babe, while both boats got in another harpoon, and we backed away to await the flurry. She turned towards our boat, then once again to No. 1, then ran her nose full tilt into the carcase of her babe, scattering the birds which circled round, screaming, as if resenting interference.

Her flurry was a terrible one. She ejected great portions of cuttlefish, fully twenty feet long. First her tail went skywards, then came down with a terrific crash, sending up a deluge of water which created a

big sea. Then with enormous vitality she threw her body clean out of the water, and we saw the harpoons protruding from her ventral sides, also the grey and silver stomach which flashed in the sunlight. This wonderful creature fell back into the sea—many tons of flesh and blubber. Her great jaws opened and shut as though she suffered terrible agony. Casey spoke for the first time:

"That was a lucky shot, sir. Niver in me loife have I seen a better one."

"You saved the skipper's boat, anyhow," said my stroke oarsman.

I was very proud of the fact that our first day's sport had secured for my boat a larger catch than No. 1. Captain Lombard shouted as he turned his boat towards the ship:

"Mr. Hedger, stand by to tow. I'll send the pinnace," and away he went, leaving us to cut the flukes of the tail and attach the tow-rope to both mother and babe.

The *Anna Lombard* was coming up very slowly, under topsails. The forecourse and cross-jack hung in the clew-garnets, the main lower topsail had been furled, also the mainsail, the main yard being cock-billed. The wind had fallen light and I knew that under such a scanty spread of canvas some time must elapse ere she reach us.

The donkey-engine was by this time hauling the second mate's catch under the stage, and the pinnace hastened towards us. When she at last drew alongside, Ivan Domeroff, who was acting engineer, congratulated me, saying that in all his career he had never seen a mad whale attacked in such a way.

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"No," said Casey, "and yer niver will. Now sure, 'twas a lucky shot!"

The carpenter had watched our manœuvres through his marine glass, and told me candidly that it was a very foolish thing to risk the lives of my boatmen. Before I could answer, Casey and the stroke oarsman leaned over the gunwall and glanced into the engine-room, and Casey said:

"Close yer jaw, Chips. I reckon it ain't nothing to do with you, anyway. If that harpoon 'ad not struck 'ome as we backed away, we may 'ave all been chewed up, and that would 'ave put the ki-bosh on the whole outfit—sure."

The carpenter attended to his engines, and I sat in the cockpit wondering what would become of the great mass of blubber after the spermaceti had been extracted from the cavity. I had known for months that when the moment arrived to destroy the carcass my soul would rebel at the waste of such a vast amount of wealth-producing material. True, I realised that we were a scientific outfit, destined to wrench from Nature some of her hidden secrets in the interests of suffering humanity. But, nevertheless, I could not quite become reconciled to the destruction of so many tons of whale-oil. As Casey once remarked when discussing this subject: "'Tain't natural, sure!"

When Ivan reappeared I said, "I don't like the idea of sinking so much blubber. It seems such a terrible waste of labour and a most precious commodity."

"Yes, so it does," he answered. "But if you expect scientific research to be conducted amidst the vile smells of an ordinary whaler, you are much mistaken. Our medical staff have fitted out this expedition to secure



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spermaceti only. Every barrel produced of the pure medicated material will be worth £1,000 sterling. There are plenty of scavengers in the sea to quickly consume every carcase we can supply."

I looked at him for a moment and turned over in my mind his words, "Every barrel worth £1,000." He seemed to speak as if he shared some responsibility for the undertaking—some authority, in spite of the fact that he was rated as ship's carpenter. He seemed to be more of an engineer, and subsequent events led me to believe that Ivan Domeroff had some financial stake in the expedition. However, it was quite evident that our medical staff knew their business, and whatever their intentions were, it was not for me to question. I had been engaged as a whaler, so I resolved to be a silent looker-on at the strangest drama ever enacted on the high seas. The greatest consolation to me was the fact that the *Anna Lombard* was the most comfortable ship possible. Life on board held a new charm. It did not matter if we sank every sperm whale in the tropical seas of both Pacific oceans. It was my privilege to witness operations of a kind never before seen in the history of whaling, so I made up my mind to jettison all my prejudices.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TO THE CHILEAN COAST

WHEN I arrived on board I was just in time to see the severed head of the second mate's catch hoisted to the deck-house by a whip and tackle from the main yard-arm, which had been cock-billed for that purpose. The great carcase was then cast adrift for the scavengers of both sea and air to feast upon. The object of hoisting the head on to the roof of the deck-house was to permit the cavity to be pierced and the wax-like substance to be extracted close to the reservoir through which it filtered into the refining machinery in the laboratory. The fore part of the ship soon resembled a slaughter-house. Blood and blubber was everywhere. When the second carcase was beheaded, and the head lifted from the water, a large shark of the man-eating variety darted forward to seize what he supposed was a choice morsel, and his teeth became fixed in the roughly hewed bones, from which he could not free himself. Fortunately, the purchase used was a fine flexible wire rope capable of lifting several tons, and we were able to gently hoist the strange load in-board. The shark fell to the deck with a crash and several men soon fell to work on it with blubber knives and spades. The man-eating shark is not in any way beloved by deep-water men, and the fighting instinct of every generation of seamen was at once aroused to

give battle to the twenty-foot monster that lay before them. Every man whose duty did not call him to another part of the ship joined in the fight. Two men received injuries which would take weeks to heal, for the beast showed sufficient vitality to wreck the ship. Over and over it rolled, darting first at one, then at another. Its movements were so quick and vigorous, no one seemed able to approach. At last, after nearly three hours, it was tossed into the sea, where it was soon devoured by its fellows.

The last head was lifted from the water, the carcase turned adrift, the stage hoisted to its resting-place on the boats' skids, and all hands were piped to dinner. When I entered the saloon, Captain Lombard called me to his cabin and bade me be seated, as there was something he would like to say concerning the episode of the morning. I felt much like a guilty schoolboy about to be judged for some misdemeanour.

"Of course," said he, glancing up at me from the navigation table, where he sat with the open log-book before him, "you know that your action this morning saved the life of myself and my boatmen?"

"I don't know, sir," I stammered awkwardly. "I saw that the only chance of securing the dam was to stop its mad rush with a harpoon, and if it had not been for the way in which Casey handled the boat, we may all have been very badly smashed up."

"Anyway," said the Captain appreciatively, "this is what I have recorded in the official log, and it gives me great pleasure to do so."

Then he read out a long rigmarole of detail which was his side of the story as seen from his boat, for both the whaleboats were in the direct line of the on-

coming whale. In glowing language he described how one of his officers in charge of No. 3 whaleboat, seeing the infuriated whale making for No. 1, dashed to the rescue, and by a very clever stroke, and heedless of possible danger, intercepted the whale and thus averted a tragedy. Then followed the date, August 22nd, 188-, in lat.  $40^{\circ} 25'$  South, long.  $60^{\circ} 32'$  West.

He shook hands with me, and I felt very proud of his congratulations. The doctors took their places at the table, looking perfectly immaculate as was their usual wont. I was greatly puzzled to know how they managed it. The conversation ran upon the mother whale's fight for her babe, and Peter Haskell remarked that the mother instinct is seen plainly manifest throughout Nature. The doctors were silent and remorseful.

After dinner I strolled forward. I could hear the machinery at work in the laboratory. Steve Finlay was firing up his boiler to maintain a high pressure of steam. The Professor disappeared into the carpenter's berth, followed by the doctors. Presently a bell rang in the 'tween decks. It was the signal for those below to resume filling the casks from the outlet pipe which protruded from the deck above.

Mr. Richester on the deck-house supervised the men who were extracting the wax-like fluid from the head of the great whale. When every drain of the liquid had been extracted the head was tumbled into the sea, and work commenced on another. My duty on these occasions was to tend the sails and with the mate supervise the navigation of the ship.

The whaleboats were hoisted and secured, the ship once more placed upon her course with every sail set,

and the decks washed down, all hands working with a will to remove traces of the great whale-hunt and the fight with the man-eater.

Joe Splendid found time to congratulate me on my exploit. He told me that he had been petrified with fear when he saw the baby whale floundering amidst a mass of white water which hid both boats from his view. He knew full well what was likely to happen, and feared that one or perhaps both the boats would be smashed to pieces. These old whalers knew every move of the big fish, therefore I considered that Joe should have been my boat-steerer, although, as it happened, Casey had proved himself quite an expert with the steering-oar. I greatly appreciated Joe's remarks, and thought that as the affair had ended so well the least said about it the better. In after years, when I discovered Joe Splendid occupying the post of watchman at St. Katherine's Wharf in London, almost the first words he said to me were:

"Lucky for you, boy, that I taught you, in the old *B*——, how to throw a harpoon. Had you not struck the brute as you did, both boats would have been smashed to smithereens!"

The capture of those three whales had a remarkable effect upon Doctors Brennan and Schwartz. From the moment they commenced action in their laboratory it seemed as though they became more silent and secretive. They stole about the decks like shadows. Sometimes I thought they were agitated by some problem, some unexpected contingency for which no preparation had been made. Towards evening I heard high words proceeding from the secret chamber. Although the heated conversation was in German, I realised that some

argument was in progress, and when the carpenter hastened aft in search of the Professor, I saw by Ivan's face that something serious was amiss. I gathered from the mate that, owing to decomposition having set in, some of the material would have to be jettisoned, the value of the spermaceti having been reduced to nil by contact with the atmosphere. The first sperm which had been decapitated had produced four large barrels of perfect medicated spermaceti. How much had been pumped overboard through a two-inch pipe, which the doctors called the superfluity outlet, I do not know. When the head of the dam had been opened, some time elapsed ere the contents of the cavity could be filtered into the laboratory, hence it was rendered worthless. This was indeed extremely vexing, especially when it is remembered to what length we went to secure the great fish. But the experience gained on this occasion would be useful. A consultation was held on the poop to discuss other ways and means of extracting the spermaceti by improved methods.

"Could it not be pumped out?" I asked Mr. Haskell. Peter looked at me for a moment, but before he answered the Professor retorted sharply:

"I suppose the pumps could be used, but every ounce of steam is required for the refining plant."

"Then," said Mr. Richester, "the deck force-pump could be used, and worked by hand."

The doctors glanced at each other as if relieved by the suggestion; as though some new-born hope had suddenly struck them, and they were all attention.

"The deck pump is not suitable," said the mate. "What is required is a powerful suction pump which will enable us to do away with the necessity of hoisting

the head on to the deck-house. The cavity could be pierced and the end of a lengthy hosepipe inserted. It would not only save time and labour, but every particle of the precious liquid could be drawn from the head. Then, gentlemen," he continued seriously, "there is another question worth considering. To-day's work has proved that we may be called upon to deal with three or more whales. With the pump and hose we can handle two carcasses at once. Two fifty-gallon iron tanks would enable us to store liquid until it is wanted in the laboratory."

Captain Lombard gazed at the standard compass in silence for a moment. He did not appear to wish to join the conversation, for he walked aft with a look of annoyance on his face. Presently he returned and said to the medical staff:

"As you know, gentlemen, that is what I wanted to purchase before we left London. I knew that our first hunt would reveal the fact that our plant was far from complete. However, you have discovered that the idea of a pump and storage tanks is the reasoning of a practical whaleman. Therefore we must purchase a pump and these other necessities if we wish to be successful in our purpose."

Mr. Richester illustrated how impossible it was to avoid bringing the scoop or ladle into contact with the blubber-lined walls of the cavity. His conversation revealed a little-known feature of this wonderful store of fatty, wax-like material which is secreted by a healthy and well-fed sperm whale. The walls of the cavity are lined with rolls of blubber and flesh, which hide many millions of tiny tubes. Imagine the lungs of an ox cut into slices, and a good idea may be formed

of my meaning. These tubes, no doubt, are used to convey the material in the cavity to various parts of the body. Not being familiar with the scientific principles of the whale's anatomy, my idea may of course be quite wrong. What I do know is that a considerable amount of trouble was caused by portions of flesh and blubber finding their way into the refining plaut and causing great delay in the progress of the work, much to the annoyance of the scientific experts, who I consider should have foreseen such a contingency while organising the outfit.

After a deal of discussion which continued far into the night watches, it was decided that we shape our course for the Chilean coast and the port of Talcahuano.

Our course was now east, north-east, the distance to the coast about fifteen hundred miles, and at the present rate of sailing the journey would take about twenty-one days. It was therefore determined to carry sail and make all possible speed, no whales to be caught *en route*. There was great jubilation amongst the forward hands when it was known that we were steering for the coast. Visions of a run on shore permeated the minds of all, several months having elapsed since any of the crew had landed. As Stevie remarked through the engine-room door, "Reckon it's time we 'ad a run on shore. I'm getting quite shipbound!"

As we approached the American continent the weather grew squally and the wind for a while veered into the east with just a little northing to rouse our vexation. Then rain fell, and for a day or so we made little or no progress. But a fine steady breeze came out of the westward, almost a gale, and we sighted land in twelve days. There was nothing about the shore



line to recall the snow-clad Andes which we had recently seen to the extreme south; not even a hill to suggest a coast range.

Talcahuano stands magnificently sheltered from the great ocean winds and green seas, a first-rate, well-protected anchorage, into which we were conducted by a pilot, an Irishman by the name of O'Hara, who boarded us off Point Arauco. This gentleman recognised Peter Haskell and greeted him as an old and respected friend, and for a while both pilot and mate disappeared below. Later in the day when they returned to the deck I pondered in my mind why this Irish pilot should pay such reverent homage to the mate of the *Anna Lombard*.

Talcahuano Bay is much to be preferred—from a shipping point of view—to the Bay of Valparaiso, which is some two hundred and sixty miles farther north. But, as far as interest is concerned, I would rather visit Valparaiso, which was then rapidly becoming the most important seaport on the coast, being served by a recently constructed railway to Santiago, the capital.

In those days Talcahuano was a medley of ship-chandlers' stores and repair shops, merchants, a few dance halls, and wine shops—whisky hells of evil repute—a fruit market, a rope walk and a unique collection of Spaniards, Italians and Mexicans. I was not interested in the surrounding country, for it looked brown and dry and barren of verdure.

As soon as the anchor was down and we cleared the customs the medical staff went on shore, accompanied by the Captain. Our smart steam-pinnace was an object of admiration to the crews of anchored ships in

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the bay, and when we drew up to the landing-stage were met by the town officials. The pilot, on landing, had informed the port authorities that we were on a voyage of discovery. We were evidently a ship of great importance, for this Irish pilot seemed to have let his imagination run amok. He had magnified our craft into an English survey ship working in the interests of the Royal Geographical Society.

I was struck by the number of armed men in semi-military uniform who lounged about the landing and waterfront, and was informed that they belonged to various irregular corps of fighting-men whom the Government was retaining in its service to inaugurate a Civic guard. At the termination of the war between Chile and Peru, in the early eighties, a similar force had been established in every seaport along the coast. Chile had issued victorious from the conflict, but the maintenance of law and order was a difficult problem, especially in a country where revolution appeared to be a national sport.

Commenting upon the period of savage conflict through which South America had passed, and upon wars in general, Peter Haskell said:

"War's aftermath is generally very bitter." He spoke as one who had experienced the horrors of conflict. He seemed to be in a reminiscent mood, for as his eyes wandered to the skyline he gave me brief glimpses of his long and interesting life. His story in many ways confirmed my convictions that he had come from a more superior class of people to those one usually finds on board ship, and as he unfolded his story my heart went out to him in deepest sympathy. My association with him during the past few months

had drawn me very close to him, and now as I reach the afternoon watches of life, I often try to imagine what bitterness of soul must have been his, for by every law of nature he should have been seated on the throne of his country.

"My father was the Duke of ——" (naming a famous European nobleman), "who contracted a legal, though secret, marriage with my mother, the daughter of a merchant of Vienna, in the year 1809. For many years they lived happily in Paris. In 1815 my father fostered the cause of the French very much against the wishes of his father, and fought the allied armies at Waterloo. My grandfather, the King of ——, ordered his son to return to the capital, then demanded that the marriage be annulled. This my father refused to do, but the courts of the country declared the marriage to be illegal, and my father was condemned to exile. He died in Paris, leaving my mother broken-hearted. So that the offspring of a royal house might not feel the pinch of poverty, my mother received a large sum of money twice a year, enabling us to live in comfort in Paris. I was educated by a private teacher selected by my royal grandfather, afterwards being sent to Berlin and finishing at the Royal Military School of Guards in Vienna, from which I graduated with honours. I was then offered a company of White Guards, but I refused to enter the army of my father's country until my mother's marriage was recognised, not that I wished to force royal recognition for myself. This was refused, so to escape the unnecessary fuss that my refusal of the position created, I became a cadet in a German sailing-ship. Then I purchased a ship, which I called the *Osprey*, and meandered about

the world, finding a cargo wherever one offered, until the Franco-Prussian war broke out. I escaped the blockading fleet of German warships and ran a large cargo into the town of Havre. Then I accepted a post in the French army as my father had done before me, and all through the long months of the siege of Paris I was major of fortifications on the ramparts. The day on which I was promoted to the rank of Major-General I was wounded, and while in hospital the Germans marched into Versailles victorious. It was then I met Dr. Brennan. When I recovered I fitted out my ship again and departed for the South Seas, and on the deck of the *Osprey* forgot to a great extent the horrors of warfare."

There was something wonderful about this old gentleman. He must have had a great liking for me to have thus outlined his past, and I wondered why. As I gazed at his handsome, almost feminine profile, I could not help wondering if the occupation of a throne would have left him so charitably disposed to mankind. It seemed impossible to imagine that this congenial, sweet-tempered man, who often reminded me of a holy father—some saint of a religious order—could have come through so many changes whole-souled, as it were.

He then spoke of a number of strange incidents in connection with the siege of Paris, which I will not repeat, as they have no interest here, other than that which caused that famous chapter in the history of France to be spoken of as an event of yesterday, although several years had passed since it had been enacted. Mr. Haskell continued:

"When the Chilean-Peruvian war broke out in the

late seventies I ran several cargoes of contraband into Callio. Then I joined the Chilean army as director and organiser of field artillery. It was during this period that I met Captain Lombard, and we have been friends ever since, for when the war terminated I went to England and lived in retirement until this deep-sea bubble was thought of, and the voyage of the *Anna Lombard* organised."

"Now I wonder why he has told me all this?" thought I, as he went aft, abruptly ending our conversation at a signal from Kong. It was rather an uncanny revelation. No wonder the afterguard in the ship treated him with such profound respect. After pondering on Peter Haskell's story for some time, humorous feelings pervaded me, and I smiled to myself as I thought of the strange collection of humanity the old ship had assembled. A king for a mate; a prince for a steward. I wondered what other surprises were in store for me.

As I gazed into the blackness and silence of the night, for there was no moon and the sky was overcast, the lights of the shipping twinkled sadly, I thought. My mind went back to a period when this anchorage saw the assemblage of Spanish ships. I do not know why it is, but every time I enter a west-American port, famous for its association with the treasure-ships of Spain, my mind takes imaginary flights into the realms of romance of those far-off days, and I seem to see galleons and store-ships loaded with the treasure of the new world, stolen wonders of a now almost forgotten civilisation. I suppose, on this occasion, it was the mate's story that caused me to dream, but I do declare that I paused in my walk, for I appeared to feel the presence of some unfamiliar person quite close to

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me, and there were strange noises in the air, for the gentle sighing of the breeze amidst the cordage and rigging produced weird sounds which were echoed by the lap-lap of the water as it gently swept round the cutwater or sternpost. Ever and anon a faint phosphorescent light appeared, which on other occasions would pass unnoticed; now it looked ghostly and death-like, and it was with a sigh of relief that I welcomed eight bells.

## CHAPTER XIV

### VALPARAISO

THREE days later, very early in the morning, Captain Lombard came aboard in a shore-launch laden with a profusion of fruit and general stores, and called the crew aft. When all had assembled, he said:

"Petty officers and seamen. The management of the expedition has decided to permit all who desire to take a run on shore. I know you will appreciate a stretch of the legs. The starboard watch will go ashore at once. I have made provision for the accommodation of those who wish to sleep on shore to board at a first-class place in Main Street. Forty-eight hours' leave will be granted to each watch. What I wish to impress upon you is this. No man will be permitted to return any the worse for strong drink, and I have great faith in you, my men, that you will conform to this restriction. Also that you will conduct yourselves as you have hitherto done, upholding the honour of your ship in such a way that her visit to this port will be remembered by the townsfolk as outstanding evidence of your good conduct and honourable behaviour. The Hotel di San Martin will be your temporary home, the bill being paid by the ship. Each man may draw a small sum of money upon application to the chief steward, and I sincerely hope you will enjoy your holi-

day, short though it may be. The pinnace will visit the landing-stage at intervals, so that any who wish to, may return to the ship. But I adjure you to strictly comply with the regulations laid down."

Needless to say, there was great rejoicing. Shore clothes had been produced and correctly pressed into shape with a sailor's iron—a lime-juice bottle filled with hot water—in anticipation of a few hours' respite from the close confinement of shipboard. The privileges granted by the Captain almost took away the breath of our forward hands. Even the pessimistic sailmaker failed to see occult forebodings in the arrangement. I certainly did not anticipate that any man would overstep the mark of confidence thus imposed upon him.

At breakfast the Captain informed us that the necessary machinery and tanks had been purchased from the Chilean Naval Department and that they would be conveyed to the ship during the course of a few days; also an additional supply of coal.

Peter Haskell called me into his cabin, telling me that he was about to visit Valparaiso for a few days; would I care to accompany him? This was an unexpected pleasure, a holiday at which I literally jumped. So, having packed a suitcase, we left the *Anna Lombard* to board the small steamer *Gil Blas*, which, according to a glaring advertisement in Spanish and English, would accomplish the journey in about twenty-seven hours, more or less. We found her a comfortable enough ship for a steamer, but decidedly American. At this time there was a considerable amount of anti-British feeling becoming manifest along the Pacific coast of both North and South America, due to the



rivalry of competing firms of financiers, and the diversity of opinion and views of prominent politicians concerning sealing rights in the Behring Seas. The little steamer carried many American passengers in her saloon, and these people were inclined to be hostile towards us, but we found the Chilean passengers hospitality personified. They seemed to vie with one another to show us little kindnesses. We treated the hostile Yankee with cool disdain, and contented ourselves with the friendly overtures of a Chilean gentleman who bore the very English name of Morgan. He was travelling to San Francisco accompanied by his wife and two daughters, rather good-looking young ladies between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five. They spoke the musical lingo of their country intermingled with the English and Spanish of an American boarding-school. When I was first introduced to them I felt exceedingly shy and awkward, but they soon drew me out of my shell and I found myself listening with great interest to many strange episodes of the late war. These young ladies smoked cigarettes with a confidence which was interesting to watch. The rolling of the steamer made promenading impossible, so we were forced to content ourselves with deck-chairs. The time passed away very pleasantly. The ladies seemed to know the history of most of the Talcahuano passengers, pointing out this important Spanish-Mexican merchant, this Yankee drummer (commercial traveller), that Government official on holiday, and so on, until I was familiar with the history of a large number of the passengers. The most pleasant experience of that short journey was the dancing on deck in the evening. The steamer entered a stretch of compara-

tively calm water hugging the coast-line of precipitous cliffs and hills, almost appalling in their grandeur. The memory of that evening lingers in my memory as I write. I can see the graceful dancers moving in the dim shadows cast by the oil deck-lights; the sombre figures of the saloon passengers as they lounged about the deck silently looking on. I can hear the strains of the music of the string band somewhere aft in the shadows, and see the waiters darting in and out dispensing cocktails and sundry drinks on well-balanced trays.

The next day as we drew near our destination, Peter Haskell pointed out the various places of interest, and towards evening when we entered the bay of Valparaiso, which seemed crowded with shipping, my admiration and enthusiasm for the scenery waxed eloquent.

The town rises from the main street which runs along the entire waterfront, rising tier on tier, picturesquely up the mountain side, the upper streets being reached by stone steps. The business portion of the city is all on the lower level, and here are large warehouses, offices, banks, Government buildings, etc. But the impression I had of Valparaiso in those days is that it was a very shabby town. Considering its beautiful surroundings, I thought it a very second-rate city.

We bade farewell to the charming Morgans, and drove to the Hotel di Santiago, one of the most pretentious buildings in the city. I found the atmosphere of the place very pleasing, especially the room placed at my disposal, which looked over the harbour and shipping. For the first time since joining the *Anna Lombard* I donned a dress suit, raiment which the reader scarcely expects to find in the kit of a whaleman, but

on my last hurried visit to my home I decided to take this sign of gentility to sea in anticipation, and as I discarded my uniform I thanked the fates which prompted me to do so.

At the head of the grand staircase I saw Peter Haskell in conversation with one of the hotel messengers, to whom he gave a letter. Then he turned, and running his critical eye over me smiled approvingly. The massive dining-room was simply a blaze of colour with blossoms of every conceivable tint. The giant chrysanthemum was much in evidence. As we dined a string band played selections of beautiful music. I saw many heads turned in our direction, and my aged friend seemed to be recognised by some of our fellow-guests. At the next table sat a number of ladies evidently of some social standing, for the attendants treated them with great diffidence. Ever and anon I noticed their eyes wander in our direction. Peter was evidently known to them, for an animated conversation was carried on in Spanish, in an undertone, and there was no mistaking the object of their interest. This was not so much a mystery to me as it would have been had I not remembered our last conversation on the ship, and when we rose from the table, a waiter handed him a note, which he read solemnly; then with a smile he said:

"We will send for our coats, and visit the Opera."

As we drove through the well-lighted streets, the mate told me why he had come to Valparaiso, and added:

"You will meet this evening some of my fellow-countrymen, and if you see anything unusual and strange, please do not appear to notice it. To-night I am not the mate of the *Anna Lombard*." His eyes

lingered on me for a moment, then he said: "And if you will forgive my remark, you don't look so very much like a sailorman."

I thought I saw a smile steal across his face as the light of a street lamp shone full on him. Presently he continued:

"Mr. Hedger, I have a strange way of taking a person's measure. I am pleased that I have not been mistaken in this instance. I saw from the first day we met that you were a gentleman born. Then subsequent events have proved that what Captain N—— of the B—— told me concerning you is quite correct—that you are a sailor by nature."

He laid his hand upon my arm, and his touch was as gentle as a woman's as he went on:

"During the next day or so you will see and hear things that may cause you to wonder. But in the light of what I have already told you they may not appear so extraordinary after all. Anyway, I hope you will enjoy yourself. But what I want to point out to you is this. You must address me as General Haskell D——, but you are still my young friend and aide-de-camp, third officer of the *Anna Lombard*.

I was growing quite accustomed to the many surprises which almost daily confronted me, but the most extraordinary fact was that I was attending the Opera with one who was none other than a famous Major-General of Fortifications of the French Army, who had played such an important part in the Chilean-Peruvian War. To-night he wore beneath his dress jacket the scarlet sash of the Legion of Honour, that famous order instituted in France by Napoleon.

Feeling very much like the famous Dean Swift's

Gulliver, I followed him up the broad stone steps into the lavishly decorated vestibule of the Opera House. An attendant took our coats and wraps. A number of well-dressed people stood gossiping in little groups or waiting for an attendant. Their eyes turned towards us in curiosity. Peter seemed to be seeking someone. I thought he appeared somewhat disappointed, but presently the crowd stood back as a number of carriages drove up to the entrance.

A tall, elderly man in the brilliant uniform of some European diplomatic corps appeared in the doorway, accompanied by several ladies. Then followed a number of Chilean officials and officers, clad in the most gorgeous uniforms I had ever seen. When the old gentleman saw my friend he hastened forward, saluted, and bowed low. All eyes were now turned in our direction, and for the first time I heard a ship's mate addressed as "Excellency." I saw tears stream down old Peter's face, and I knew that the meeting was pleasant to both. These two old men, one the servant of his country, the other an outcast, seemed strangely moved. They greeted each other in a manner understood only by dwellers in certain European countries—by a close embrace and a kiss on both cheeks. The ladies came forward and were presented, and after the first greetings, which I thought extremely reverential, they collected round him, smiling and talking excitedly. Peter then presented me to the group with much grace and courtesy, saying in English, which all appeared to understand:

"Permit me to present my friend and aide-de-camp, Mr. Hedger of the *Anna Lombard*."

The diplomat came forward, his grizzled face alight

with smiles. I thought he was going to salute me with kisses, but he simply seized my hand, which he pump-handled heartily, after which he presented me to the members of his staff. The whole party then commenced to speak in English.

The wife of General S—— allowed me to escort her up the grand staircase. I saw old Peter glance sideways at me with a look of approval. I was determined to let him see that I was neither shy nor embarrassed by the unusual company into which I was so suddenly taken. This beautiful old lady, who appeared to me like a piece of delicate Dresden china, was extremely enthusiastic at meeting once more "His Excellency." Apparently many years had passed since she had last seen General Haskell D——, and I wondered if she knew that the present meeting was due to the necessity of obtaining a suction pump. There was something about that pump that I dearly loved, and when at last I saw it, I actually wanted to caress it, as it was the means of our excursion to Valparaiso and my introduction into diplomatic circles. These thoughts flashed through my mind as I escorted the lady up the stairway to the General's private box. Madam accepted my attention with the air and grace of a queen, reminding me of the homeland, and a certain sweet old lady—my grandmother—whom my present companion so much resembled.

I cannot say that I saw much of the Opera. It was a Spanish production, but I cannot now remember the name. I was too interested in the dear old lady who was determined to make me feel at ease. She explained much of the singing, and when I told her that only a few months before joining the *Anna Lombard* I had

spent a short holiday in Paris, her eyes sparkled with tears. Paris was home to her. Although she had lived in many great cities, she loved the French capital above all others.

Peter Haskell and his friend were deep in conversation, hid in the shadows of heavy plush curtains which obscured the box from the audience, but enabled us to see the whole of the stage.

Between the acts several people came into the box, but I do not remember all to whom I bowed. There were many, and their names have long since faded from my memory. When the curtain rose again amid a crash of music and loud acclamation I was not interested. I was listening intently to Madam S—— telling of her early friendship with Peter. She concluded by saying :

“The General and my husband have been friends since boyhood, and we were very pleased to know that he was to spend a few days in Valparaiso. Of course, we would not permit him to stay at the hotel, so we have placed our humble residence at his disposal, and I most sincerely hope, Mr. Hedger, that you will make yourselves at home.”

## CHAPTER XV

### THE HOME OF MADAM S——

IT was just after midnight when we set off on our journey up the mountain roadway to the residence of General S——, having had supper in the restaurant of a large hotel near the Opera House.

No opportunity occurred for exchanging a word with Peter Haskell, for Madam had taken me under her wing, seeming proud of her proprietary, and my chief was too deeply interested in his friends and fellow-countrymen, all of whom wore the uniform of the Chilean Army. When I took my seat beside Madam in a splendidly appointed carriage, drawn by two spirited horses, I saw my friend surrounded by a group of officers, standing in the vestibule of the hotel, and knew that he would follow with the General in another coach.

Madam S—— informed me that she had been living in Chile for five years. During the war her husband had been a Professor of military tactics, but now he was employed by his country to watch its commercial interests, having been appointed Consul-General.

Our progress was very slow, the greater part of the journey being up-hill. The carriage laboured uncomfortably over rough roads, creaking on its springs and making as much fuss as an overloaded whaleboat in a heavy sea, but Madam relieved the journey by telling me about Peter's early life:



"General Haskell D—— is a wonderful man, as you, young sir, no doubt realise. His royal blood is full of romance and adventure. Goodness only knows what would have happened had he ascended the throne of his country." She spoke as though she knew I was fully acquainted with certain facts connected with my chief's past. After a brief pause she continued reminiscently:

"During the late war he successfully ran the blockade with supplies for the Chilean army. Such adventures have a strange fascination for him. His first famous exploit in this direction was during the Franco-Prussian war. Nine years later he transferred his services to this country, and a large number of his fellow-countrymen followed him."

She lapsed into silence, lying back among the soft cushions and passing one delicate arm through the carriage-strap beside her, apparently lost in thought. I endeavoured to penetrate the darkness through the window. Ever and anon I caught a glimpse of the bay with its numerous lights, and realised that we must have risen to a considerable altitude. Presently Madam looked up, as if apologising for her silence, and continued:

"It is such a pleasure to entertain our dear friend again, even though it be for only a few days. When the Foreign Legion was disbanded at the termination of the war, General D—— disappeared, and for a long time nothing was heard of him, until he wrote us from London before his present undertaking. Then when we heard that he was in Talcahuano, we were overjoyed at the prospect of seeing him."

The carriage now turned on to a more even roadway from which we had a grand view of the bay. The myriad lights of the shipping and lower town presented a never-to-be-forgotten picture which lingers still in my memory. Suddenly the view vanished abruptly, as we entered the grounds of a large house, and came to a standstill before an open doorway from which streamed a glare of light. A man-servant in brilliant livery opened the carriage door and I assisted Madam to the portico. She seemed greatly excited and said something to the servant in Spanish. He bowed and vanished, and as we entered the doorway, two young ladies, the wives of staff officers, were introduced. Said Madam: "Let us wait to receive the General here."

Another carriage drew up, from which stepped General S— and Peter Haskell, accompanied by two staff officers; then a third carriage unloaded more officers.

I found myself in a brilliantly lit hall, the walls of which were panelled with slabs of red and grey marble. Tall marble columns supported the arches of a vaulted ceiling, which was decorated in the Italian Renaissance style. This remarkable ceiling was some twenty feet from the floor, which was in mosaic and of a design harmonising with the ceiling. A marble staircase at the far end of the hall was decorated with grey marble and highly polished onyx stone, and must have been fully fourteen feet wide.

As my chief and the General entered, the ladies bowed low, reminding me of a Court scene in a past generation. But I knew that faithful friends and loyal subjects would pay homage to their lawful ruler, and I saluted in the good old English way. I was then pre-

sented to the staff officers, who led me through a doorway into a smoke-room, where a servant dispensed cocktails or iced lager beer, according to our respective tastes.

I will draw a veil over the very solemn toast which we then honoured, for it had a significant political meaning which respect for my dear old friend bids me leave unrecorded.

The ladies joined us, partaking of a nightcap and a cigarette before retiring. Then Madam came to my side and offered me her hand, saying :

"Good-night, Mr. Hedger. Pedro will escort you to your room when you wish to retire. I hope you will make yourself perfectly comfortable in our humble home."

With a hearty handshake and a bow to the others she retired.

It must have been nearly two o'clock in the morning when a servant came to me saying that Madam had instructed him to show me to my room should I wish to retire, which I certainly did, and as the young officers, who had been entertaining me with stories of warfare, were also retiring, I followed in his wake, up the broad stairs, admiring the walls and luxurious mirrors and massive furniture, marvelling to myself as I repeated Madam S——'s words: "Humble home!"

On the first landing I paused to admire the picture of a Spanish soldier in armour, and glancing down into the smoking-room, I caught Mr. Haskell's eye. He waved me good-night with a smile, and I followed my guide, who opened a door and said in broken English :

"Señor, your room. If there is anything that the

Señor requires, please ring the bell. I will answer."

I thanked him and he bowed and vanished. My feelings may be better imagined than described. I stood almost dumbfounded with surprise. I was to occupy one of the most beautiful rooms I had ever seen, and at that moment was glad there were no spectators to my embarrassment. Indeed, my unsteady nerves seemed incapable of comprehension just then. Was it the effects of an extra cocktail? However, after a moment or two, I commenced to explore my bedroom. I found that my suitcase, or, as it was then called, my valise, had arrived from the hotel, so I fumbled for my night-clothes, and gradually prepared to occupy the luxurious four-poster bed, draped with dainty silk curtains which resembled flower-decorated gossamer. It seemed sacrilegious for a common whaleman to lie on that beautiful bed. The furniture of the room was of polished maple of a quaint old English style, and as my eyes wandered round the chamber, I saw two casement windows opening on to a spacious balcony. I cautiously raised the latch of one, that the cool night air might subdue the throbbing of my perplexed brain, and stepped out. I could see the lights of the shipping in the bay, which lay, so it seemed, at my feet like a star-spangled map of the heavens. The silence was broken by the chirrup of an insect, and ever and anon a firefly would cross my range of vision. It was all so wonderful! I wished it might last for ever, but I tumbled into bed determined to indulge in only a very short nap, that I might view the dawn from the balcony.

I must have slept for some hours, for when I awoke, the sun was streaming through the open casement with a warm glow, which proclaimed almost mid-forenoon.

A man-servant stood at my bedside, and on a tiny table I saw my breakfast on a silver tray. I was soon wide awake, extremely amused at the absurdity of the situation. Here close at hand were ham and eggs, toast and coffee, cream and hot rolls, all dished up in good old English style on solid silver plate; a servant in livery bowing and eager to do my bidding. In his best English he was trying to make me understand that there was no necessity for me to rise if I did not wish to do so. Madam's orders were that the Señor was to make known his pleasure. If the Señor would care to bath before breakfast, Pedro would conduct him to the bathroom, otherwise luncheon would be served at one hour after noon.

"To the bath!" said I, springing out of bed, thoroughly ashamed of having slept so long. But when he told me that none of the household were astir, that it was customary for them to remain in their rooms until noon, I was somewhat mollified, but very disappointed that I had not seen the break of day from the balcony as I had planned.

Neither Peter Haskell nor the General appeared at lunch. Madam apologised for their absence, explaining that they had gone to the city, but would return later, as Madam was giving a dinner—"just an informal affair," said she, "in honour of General Haskell D——." Madam entertained me with stories of the late war, conducting me to her study, where she exhibited many interesting mementoes and souvenirs of that historic chapter in Chilean history. It was evident that this lady was a keen student of natural history, for the bookshelves held many noted works on this subject, and special attention had been given to

marine animals, for pictures of gigantic cuttlefish and deep-sea monsters adorned the walls. I did not comment upon these things: it was too much like talking "shop," and there were so many other interesting things in that room. I disregarded all items pertaining to my profession. From scraps of information that Madam let fall from time to time, I gathered that both she and her husband were devoted to my chief, also that she was interested in the purpose of the voyage of the *Anna Lombard*. Indeed, I wondered if she or her husband had some financial interest in the undertaking, and if our visit to Talcahuano was not the haphazard chance I had at first supposed, and I racked my brain for some tangible reason why I had been selected to accompany Peter to Valparaiso. The answer I discovered later. Madam spoke in glowing terms of Doctors Brennan and Schwartz, whom she had met in Paris after the fall of the Commune. She also knew Professor Lun, describing him as one of Europe's leading authorities on that fell disease, consumption or tuberculosis. It was her glowing enthusiasm for the hope of certain cure to the many sufferers from the terrible complaint which enlightened me most. From her I gathered more information about Professor Lun's remarkable discovery than from any other source.

"You, Mr. Hedger," she said with a winsome smile, "are contributing to the great cause by your exertions in hunting the great sperm. It must be very wonderful, and require great courage and skill to hunt these great mammals. Tell me," she exclaimed as we went into her garden, where gorgeously coloured roses blossomed in profusion, "tell me, please. The sperm whale is the largest creature on land or sea?"

"Yes," I replied, "unless, of course, one considers the giant cuttle-fish, or *Sepia octopodia*."

"Have you ever seen one?" she questioned.

"No. That is, not whole and at close quarters."

"Not whole?" she repeated seriously. "I do not understand."

"Madam," I said hesitatingly, "the circumstances under which a whalerman meets portions of the cuttle-fish are scarcely fit to repeat to a lady."

She pushed aside the branches of a tall palm-tree, and we stood on a terrace beside the entrance to a stone pergola which was aflame with some scarlet flowering creeper exquisitely perfumed. At the extreme end of the terrace stood what I took to be a tiny church, for in a niche above the entrance was a statue of the Virgin Mary holding a child, reminding me of others I had seen in Catholic countries.

She followed my gaze and said with a smile:

"That is an old Spanish mission house. I will tell you its story as we inspect it. But I do hope you will tell me all you know about the *Sepia octopodia* and other deep-sea monsters."

I could not understand why she should be interested in such things. It seemed so much out of place. Indeed, I was reluctant to break the spell of this charming place by calling to mind pictures of the horrors of creation which for so many years I had done my utmost to forget. But her next words convinced me that it was my duty to tell her all I knew, for she continued:

"And the circumstances under which you whalermen meet portions thereof? Being something of a naturalist I am interested."

"Has your study of natural history led you to deep-

sea monsters, madam," I questioned, for I, too, under the guidance of Peter Haskell and his wonderful library, had tried to improve my mind in this direction, although I was certain I would never be able to master the technical terms and scientific names so necessary to this branch of study.

"Yes," she replied, "that section of natural history has for many years been of great interest to me. I have written on the subject, many of my papers having been published in the journal of the German Scientific Research Society; especially one concerning a monstrous creature washed up on the rocks at Valderia some two years ago. My account of that creature appeared in many important newspapers in Europe and America. So if you know anything of these monsters, please tell me, and from your data I can write other articles."

I saw that I was being led into a discussion which I disliked, but if she desired me to talk shop, it was clearly my duty to do so.

"I have never seen the gigantic cuttle at close quarters," I began. "The portions that have come under my notice have been vomited from the stomach of a dying cachalot—or sperm whale. Some of these parts have been at least twenty-five or thirty feet in length, having at the extreme end a series of discs, some a foot to eighteen inches in diameter. One of these specimens had, I remember, in addition to this adhering apparatus, a set of claws round the inside edge of the suckers, resembling the claws of a great crayfish. This I think proves that there are more than one species of *Sepia octopodia*, but I think they are all classed scientifically as Mollusca, which seems to include all soft-



bodied animals in the sea. Then again the gigantic squid possesses, besides the eight branch legs or feelers, two tremendous tentacles. On some of these I have seen as many as six suckers, of all sizes, ranging from great basin-like receptacles to tiny ones, only about an inch in diameter. At the base—or where they join the body—they are sometimes so thick that a man could scarcely embrace them, so you see, madam, this creature is indeed tremendous.”

“Yes,” she returned, glancing down the valley with a shudder, placing one hand over her eyes as though to shut out the awful picture my words had created in her mind. No doubt she again saw the terrible monster of Valderia. “To students of marine natural history, your calling, Mr. Hedger, offers unique fields of observation,” she said.

“Yes,” I answered, “there is no other class of seafarer who is brought into such close contact with the almost-unknown monsters of the deep as is the whaleman. And yet little or no notice is taken of the wonderful creatures.”

“That, sir, is a crime,” she said, turning upon me suddenly, “an unforgivable crime. But I suppose the whaling-ship masters are too busy heaping up profits for their owners to trouble about the scientific side of their calling. But nevertheless it is a most regrettable fact that even among seafaring men so little is known about these creatures which appear from time to time on the surface. It is a very interesting subject to me, Mr. Hedger,” she declared, as she led me along the terrace towards the ruins of the mission house. Her next statement was a surprise, for she said:

“Our dear old friend the General knew how inter-

ested I would be in hearing of your experiences. I am indeed pleased to meet one who can give me first-hand information on this subject."

So the secret was out. Our many dog-watch deck tramps, and mutual exchange of ideas and experiences, had caused Peter to think that the data collected by me and stored in the log-book of my very retentive memory would interest and amuse this congenial old lady, whose hobby apparently was the collecting of material to write a book on deep-sea monsters. But I realised how very vague and meagre was the information I could give her. Except for a few startling incidents, adventures which are almost daily occurrences in the life of a whaler, I thought my information very ordinary. Then I told her of my experience in the old whaling-ship *B*—— during her cruise among the Aleutian Islands, a story already known to the reader.

"Of course," said she, glancing at me from the corner of her eyes, "you have seen the sea-serpent?"

"No, madam," I returned with a smile, "but I can assure you that one sight witnessed by us in the *B*—— off the Sandwich Islands could have easily been mistaken for the subject of that well-worn fable."

She led me to a marble seat of ancient workmanship, which I imagined must surely have graced the palace of some long-forgotten Incas. My look of inquiry passed unnoticed, and Madam placed me beside her, saying graciously:

"I am interested; please tell me," so after a moment's reflection, I commenced:

"It was during a spell of very light winds that we noticed a sudden commotion some distance away on the starboard bow. I saw something flashing in the after-

noon sunlight. The Captain's curiosity was aroused so much that he let the ship go off a little, and as the thing drifted closer we saw that a huge cuttlefish held something in its grip. I ran aloft with my glasses to gain a better view, and saw that something black and massive was entangled by a maze of arms and tentacles. The convulsive working of the mass told me that it was a whale which appeared to be nearly dead—exhausted, no doubt, by the pressure of the entwining arms. A spout of water went skywards; the swish of a great tail endeavoured to shake off the tentacles, but to no avail. One tremendous arm, fully fifty feet long, rose from the water, the end massive and flat like a serpent's head, waved from side to side for a moment or two, then fell with a crash, seizing the tail in its grip. The jaws of the whale were working slowly, and every now and again portions of the cuttlefish floated away to quickly disappear into the mouths of the fighting flock of lesser fish—spectators of the terrific struggle. Great shafts of water hid the fighters for a while. Over and over they rolled, then lay on the surface as though to regain breath for another effort. As we drew nearer the swarm of sharks, bonito, dolphin, and almost every deep-water fish could be distinguished, struggling and fighting for their share of the feast. Then they disappeared."

I glanced at the lady beside me to see what effect my story had upon her. She appeared exceedingly interested, and waited for me to continue.

"The sight of the terrible struggle unnerved me a little. I remained aloft for a while expecting the fighters to return. I was fascinated, though scared. Indeed, the eyes of the monster which showed up so

vividly amidst the mass of whiteness haunted me for months, and long after they had sounded, the surface of the sea was impregnated with the sepia fluid, which in this case must have been a plenteous supply. As likely as not they finished up on the bed of the ocean. That evening Captain N—— told me that he once lay becalmed in a small trading schooner, in the early sixties, somewhere among the Fiji Islands. One very hot evening his schooner was attacked by a great cuttlefish, and for over two hours the crew were engaged cutting away the arms and tentacles of the beast, which clawed at any and every thing within reach. He described how some of the arms were fully twenty feet long and contained suckers which pulsated. The claw-like formation round the outer edges—which I have already described—opened and shut long after they were severed from the body, suggesting something of its enormous vitality. He also told me that one long tentacle, twice the length of all the others, came up from the other side of the creature like a great serpent and caught the forerigging, snapping one of the rope swiftness. If there is such a creature as a sea-serpent, I for one do not wish to see it—that is, at close quarters.”

“Some day science will find out more about these terrible creatures,” said Madam.

“Yes,” I returned, “but a special expedition must be fitted out for that purpose, for in an ordinary whaling-ship the work is fast and furious, and there is little or no time to carry out scientific research. Whale oil, and plenty of it, is the main issue.”

“Thank you, Mr. Hedger,” she said kindly. “I am delighted with your story. It is indeed interesting to hear first-hand accounts of the giant squid. Of course,

the creature would not be such a formidable enemy of the whale if it were not for the terrible organs of prehension at the end of the arms and tentacles."

"No," I answered, "perhaps not. But even these fearful weapons do not always act. I have seen quite a number of huge circular impressions on the tough hide of a sperm whale's back, a hide as stubborn as a hippopotamus. The enormous pressure can be only measured and imagined by the depth and size of the impressions."

Madam rose and walked to the stone balustrade of the terrace as if eager to change the subject, which to me was growing wearisome. Presently she pointed down the valley and said:

"Do you like the view from this corner, Mr. Hedger?"

I saw the rounded hills, which, while partially protected by vegetation, were worn by the mountain cascades into a number of little gullies, the sides of which appeared to be composed of a red and yellow clay, against which the white stone houses stood out in very strong contrast. From my position on the terrace I had a fine view of the Andes, but they appeared to be a great distance off. The volcano Aconoaqua made a magnificent picture in the clear atmosphere, the snow-clad slopes reflecting a wonderful beauty which held me spellbound.

Did I like the view? I was simply bewitched, my whole soul was stirred. I could neither move nor speak, and Madam, who so often must have gazed down upon that picture, seemed loth to break the charm of the moment. Then her face lit up with a smile as she said: "Isn't it grand?"

"Yes," I returned. "It is superb in its grandeur."

It did seem a crime to talk of deep-sea monsters while contemplating such infinite beauty, but Madam reminded me that the same Supreme Power was responsible for all things, great and small. Unconsciously she spoke the very words that my chief had so often used.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN"

I SHALL pass over the remainder of our stay in the hospitable home of General S——, which was all too short for my liking, for there is much of my story as yet untold, and I do not wish to weary the reader with every detail of that very enjoyable episode.

During the return journey to Talcahuano Mr. Haskell left me very much alone, for he was deeply interested in some documents and newspapers which seemed to be of importance. What they were, of course, I do not know. Time did not hang so heavily on my hands, as I had promised Madam S—— to write a detailed account of all the interesting features of the future movements of the *Anna Lombard*. This was a task most tasteful to me, and the compiling of the history of our journey previous to reaching the Chilean coast gave me plenty to think about. But my lack of scientific training caused me vague misgivings as to my capability of expressing myself clearly. When I explained my apprehension to Mr. Haskell, he said, smiling :

"Madam will understand. Furthermore, young man, experience is worth all the book learning."

"But," I returned somewhat ashamed of my ignorance, "Madam questioned me concerning the construction and anatomy of the whale, and for the life of me I could not tell her the scientific name of one bone."

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He laughed, and said: "Leave the technical definitions to the more learned professors of natural history. Tell her in true sailor language of all you see. She will then produce a book worth reading."

We did not discuss the matter further, but I determined to dig deeper into his prodigious library and read up all I could on the subject ere we again entered into conflict with the monarch of the deep.

The steamship *Pacific Wanderer* was not so comfortable as the craft in which we had journeyed northward; but she was much faster. I did not seek the acquaintance of any of the large number of saloon passengers, whose sole pleasure seemed to be playing some game of chance in the smoke-room or saloon, wherever there was protection and shelter from the excessive rolling of the ship. A crowd of cosmopolitan men and women appeared, all eager to gain possession of other people's money. I was considerably amused at them, emphasising, as they did, the truth of that well-known axiom that lookers-on get most of the fun. I was able thus to witness—almost experience—the emotions of both the winner and the loser. This has been my attitude towards the spirit of gambling all my life.

Late in the afternoon of the following day we passed through the fleet of anchored ships in Talcahuano roadstead. The *Anna Lombard* was surrounded by lighters, and baskets of coal were being hoisted on board by the rattling steam-winch.

At the landing-stage we were met by Professor Lun, who arrived in the pinnace. Casey was in charge and he hailed me with his usual cheery greeting. He whispered to me as our luggage was being hauled on board, that Captain Lombard had been suddenly seized by a



kind of heart attack, which was indeed surprising, for the Captain was one of those health-inspiring men whose fresh complexion and wonderful vitality seem to be the very acme of physical perfection. That we were well supplied with medical men whose knowledge and skill were at the command of our leader offered some comfort but little consolation, for I realised with a thrill of dread that, after all, specialists were of little avail if the Captain's complaint should reach chronic stages, and to lose the leader of our expedition would perhaps cut short the most interesting voyage undertaken by man since the early explorers entered the Pacific. When we reached the ship I was relieved to see the Captain pacing the deck with his son-in-law, evidently fully recovered from his late seizure.

At daybreak next morning, we hove anchor, and stood out to sea, having cleared the Customs, naming Honolulu in the Sandwich group as our next port of call, to which place all mails were to be forwarded.

I strolled forward, curious to inspect the pump, the cause of my unexpected holiday. I found a small portable boiler and compressor had been secured in front of the fore mast, the pump being fixed on the top of the deck-house. The new tanks between the foremost whaleboat spoilt the look of the *Anna Lombard*, destroying her yacht-like appearance, but I foresaw that the new machinery would enable us to work upon two whales when weather and circumstances permitted, reducing the labour to a minimum. Joe Splendid remarked as he explained the use of the additional plant:

"One man in a bos'n's chair is all that is necessary to control the nozzle attached to the hosepipe. No bloody mess on deck now, sir."

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The ship was in splendid trim. An equivalent weight of sand ballast had been disposed of at the last anchorage, and the additional coal being carried in the lower hold, caused the craft to sail with a certain spring which was very pleasant to experience; but our progress northward was rather slow. We must have presented a beautiful sight, sailing over the sparkling, sunlit waters with every stitch of canvas spread, the wind one point abaft the beam. While lying at anchor in the Talcahuano roadstead, a coat of paint had been given to the outside of the hull, a very light silver-grey, almost white. No finer picture could be imagined.

Steve Finlay tested the new machinery, with Stockley the London seaman as understudy. Jones, the sailmaker, informed me as we commenced work on a new sail that the crew greatly appreciated their holiday; not one, either by word or deed, had violated the trust imposed in them, every man returning to the ship as sober as he had gone ashore—rather an unusual occurrence in those days. The terrible white whisky locally known as "Pisco" had a great fascination for merchant seamen.

"What about the Carney ship now, Mr. Jones?" I asked with a smile. He looked up from his work and gazed at me for a moment. There was a strange look in his pale almost watery blue eyes, which told me he was influenced by some nervous dread. His lips quivered and trembled as if he feared to express the superstition that consumed him. He glanced up through the open hatchway, then leaned forward and said in husky tones:

"The unusual conditions which prevail in this ship are not conducive to good discipline. When a number

of men live so close together in so small a space and are so well fed, sooner or later something happens. It is the daily tot of rum which will finally cause trouble—or I'm a Dago."

"Mr. Jones," I said seriously, somewhat vexed at his vague suspicions, "have you heard any whispers of discontent among the crew?"

"No, sir," he answered, startled by my question.

"Well," I returned sharply, "why these vague statements?"

"I don't know," he replied. "I cannot tell you, but I have certain powers which enable me to interpret signs of coming trouble. . . ."

"What signs have you seen?" I interrupted, rather amused. Our conversation seemed very much out of order in such a comfortable home.

"You would not understand, sir, unless, that is, you were a student of such things."

"I'm a student of my calling in all its phases," I returned somewhat heatedly. "I realise that hitherto the lives of all the crew of this ship, like those of other sailors in these days, have been spent on ships all more or less noted for some particular form of harshness and severity of discipline. The success of the great shipping ventures depends upon the enforcement of law and order to which the seafaring man has grown accustomed. Nearly every shipmaster or mate has his own code, as it were. Some maintain discipline by brute force, some by inspiring superstitious fear, others by kindness. Of late years, owing to the keen competition of the steamer, and the anxiety of the sailing-ship master to reduce expenses, the life of the sailor is far from being a bed of roses, until at last he has come to look

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askance upon the smooth-tongued Carney—as you term it—shipmaster. In this case, Mr. Jones, your superstitions are entirely unfounded."

"I tell you, sir, that the very contentment, the peacefulness of the crowd in the fo'c'sle, fills me with misgivings. Why," he said, rising from his bench hurriedly, "there hasn't even been a scrap for the place of fo'c'sle boss."

"Why should there be a fight for such a position?" I asked. "Such a fine body of men, all expert seamen, have no wish to boss each other. Furthermore, such an event would certainly cause many luxuries to be withdrawn, and this, I think, is the reason why every member of the crew is on his guard."

The work progressed in silence for a time, and I thought that my pessimistic companion had grown tired of the conversation, but presently he leaned forward and said seriously:

"Did you ever see the *Flying Dutchman*, Mr. Hedger?"

"No," I answered with a laugh, for the question seemed so ridiculous. "I think it is quite time that rational-minded seamen forgot that old myth and superstition. In these days of enlightenment and education, when every phenomenon of the sea is scientifically explained, it seems strange to hear such a question from the lips of one so self-possessed."

My answer seemed to irritate him, and I searched my mind for ways and means of changing the conversation, but my next question provoked his superstition, for I referred to his experience of the small-pox stricken ship, but was sorry a moment later, for he said:

"When I set out on that unfortunate voyage, I was

influenced by the same uncanny misgivings of coming evil as now pervade me," and by the flash of his eyes I saw he was indeed labouring under some strange spell of fear. For the first time in my life I understood how a man might easily become hypnotised, as it were, by his fears and imagination.

I rose to my feet to straighten the canvas upon which I was working, and then triced out the bolt-rope, the leach-line, previous to roping the sail. He watched me in meditative silence, and as he reached me an iron thimble, or cringle, I questioned:

"Have you told anyone else of your suspicions, Mr. Jones?"

"No, I have not. Joe Splendid, with whom I berth, would not listen to me, and I fear his ridicule."

"Do you not fear mine?"

"No, neither you nor Mr. Haskell would ridicule my story, but you might suggest that I was suffering from some strange disease of the mind."

"Perhaps the Professor, or maybe the doctors, could find some scientific name for your malady and suggest some treatment," I returned.

"Treatment is not necessary, neither is my mind deranged. I am simply specially gifted by nature to see certain things which are hidden from the eyes of ordinary mortals. In other words, Mr. Hedger, I am gifted with certain clairvoyant powers, whereby I can clearly foretell coming events."

I gazed at him in amazement, not knowing how to answer, for I had never met one thus endowed, and rather than reveal my ignorance I preferred to remain silent. But my mind was active, extremely active, working on the possibility of his being one of those imagi-

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native persons who have created many of the crude myths and superstitions which have influenced the lives of many generations of seamen. Fortunately for the peace of mind of the modern seafarer, science and common sense, together with higher education, were explaining much seemingly unnatural phenomenon. The very mention of the *Flying Dutchman* is sufficient to bring down upon one's head a shower of ridicule.

"It was off the Cape of Good Hope in the old *Iron-dale* that I first saw the Phantom Ship," said he, as he threaded a needle. "It was a beautiful evening and a light breeze sent the ship through the water at about seven knots. The moon rose in a dark cloud right ahead, but as the wind was on the starboard quarter no notice was taken of the strange cloud formation, although the glass predicted a change. I was standing under the forerigging, admiring the play of moonlight on the water, when out of the cloudbank sailed a large ship with high poop deck and tessellated forecastle, high-standing bowsprit with sprit-sails. I was simply dumb-founded, for she was a craft so hopelessly out of date, and what attracted my attention most were the courses and topsails with their four reef-bands and massive gores, and the sliding gunter on the mizzen. The top-gallant sheets were flying loose while men were clewing up and hauling down a great try-sail which never seemed to reach the deck. I could hear it flapping while the men were shouting in some strange tongue which I could not understand. She passed astern with a howling gale behind her, while we simply had a seven-knot breeze, as I said, from the opposite direction. I saw the stern with lantern lamps, her great stern-windows and projecting rudder, and from her drooping sliding-

gunter spar I saw the ancient flag of Holland. When she faded out of sight I gazed round, and saw that the only men who might have seen the stranger were the look-out man, or the man at the wheel. The officer of the watch had stepped into the charthouse to consult the barometer. I shouted to the man on the fo'c'sle head: 'Did you see the ship?'

" 'What ship?'

" 'The one that passed astern,' I replied, pointing to the distant horizon.

" 'Garn, Sails, yer want yer 'ed read. Seeing things, ain't yer?'

"I knew that it was hopeless to argue, but when we came across the fever ship in the Indian Ocean a few months later, and small-pox broke out in the *Irondale*, and one by one the crew died, I remembered what I had seen. It was the *Flying Dutchman* all right. She had come to me as a warning of coming trouble, and when we were dismasted and only six of us escaped after so many days in an open boat, I knew that there must be some occult reason for the Dutchman's visit."

"It was indeed a remarkable visit and a strange coincidence," I returned, interested in his clear description of the old Dutch tradition. "Are you sure your mind is not in any way influenced by reading Captain Marryat's book *The Phantom Ship*?"

"I read that story when a boy, but don't you think it very strange that I should see that ship again?" he said with trembling lips, saying the last words almost in a whisper.

"When did you last see it, Mr. Jones?" I asked, a little more interested.

"Yesterday evening at nine o'clock," he returned.

## THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN"

I paused in my work and inwardly questioned his sanity. But he looked so much in earnest it seemed a crime to doubt him.

"I saw the craft under almost the same conditions," said he, "except that she lay becalmed while we sailed with a five-knot breeze. I could see her old captain walking the high poop deck, his face wrinkled by many scowls. From his lips fell vehement curses which seemed to be repeated by all his crew. There was no mistaking the ship; the stern lanterns and open windows were the same as I had seen in the Indian Ocean, and I knew it was the *Flying Dutchman*. This time I did not mention the fact to a living soul, you are the first person to whom I have spoken. But I cannot help thinking that this cruise is destined to end in disaster in much the same way as did the cruise of the old *Irondale*.

It was almost impossible in those days to pass a number of years at sea, mingling with men of all nations and ages, without meeting someone who was acquainted with the story of the Phantom Ship. The reader no doubt is familiar with the traditional curse of the Dutch skipper, Van der Decken, who is supposed to have cursed the creator of the head winds which prevented him from beating round the Cape of Good Hope. There is no need to repeat the story, it has been so often told and retold by writers who *know*; the origin of the yarn has been lost in the mists and fogs of antiquity. I could scarcely believe my ears when I listened to the sailmaker as he calmly sat on his bench and deliberately told me that he had twice seen the wandering Dutchman. I hardly knew how to answer him.



"Are you sure that what you saw was not a mirage?"

"Not on your life," he answered suddenly. "It was no mirage."

"But I understood that the Dutch Ship is only seen off the Horn, running the eastern down, or beating off the Cape of Good Hope, while our position at noon yesterday was  $32^{\circ}$  S. lat., long.  $88^{\circ}$  W. Too tropical for the Dutchman," I said with a smile.

"I have met men whom I have every reason to believe were speaking the truth, and who have seen the ship north of the equator, in the Pacific."

"Poor spiritual Van der Decken," I said, thinking to turn the conversation into a joke. "Doomed to roam the waters of the world for all time. I wonder if future generations will see him, Mr. Jones? You must have let your imagination run away with you. What you saw—or thought you saw—was the imagination of your brain. If I were you I would try to forget it——"

"Blow-O, blow-O, blow-O!" came from the crow's-nest, which abruptly terminated our conversation, and I quickly climbed to the deck. The man aloft shouted: "Sperm whale on the port bow."

Then in the excitement of the chase I dismissed from my mind the story told me by the superstitious sail-maker.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SEPIA OCTOPODIA

NO little excitement prevailed when we realised that sperm whale had at last been raised, and lay in goodly numbers on the distant skyline. While the ship was being placed in such a condition that would gain for her the weather gage, whaleboats were silently lowered and manned. Orders came fast and furious. We were not to stand on ceremony. It was usual to permit the senior officer's boat to get fast to a whale first, but our orders were to "get in," and as we dashed away from the ship's side, each boat with lug-sails and jib set, we spread out, each crew a separate unit operating on its own initiative.

Three boats had left the ship; but my boat was very bluff of bow, roomy and staunch, but a bad sailer, which was extremely vexing to such an eager crew as mine. The second mate's boat was rapidly drawing to windward, making for the nearest whale. Tiny jets of vapour rising from the hollows of the waves proclaimed the whales to be numerous.

It was wonderful to see those monsters playing and gambolling in the bright spray as if in pure exuberance of spirit, displaying a marvellous vitality by springing many feet into the air and falling with a crash into the water, making a report like the firing of large cannon. A monster rose some distance ahead, and

Casey, ever watchful, at a signal, brought the boat into the wind. The sheet hauled aft, which enabled me to plunge my harpoon into the whale, right up to the hitches. The terrified creature immediately plunged into the depths, while the mast was quickly unshipped and each man seated ready with his oar. Faster and faster went the line, first one tub then another was emptied. Then it slackened, for the whale was rising rapidly. In came the line worked by two pairs of hands with lightning speed, and the water turned into a creamy white liquid lashed by the infuriated whale.

"Back all!" I yelled, as he came up with gaping jaws, a twenty-five foot archway with rows of gleaming teeth, ready to take the boat in at one mouthful. "Back for your lives!" My second order was not needed, for my nimble crew were seasoned hands and knew perfectly what was wanted. Instead of flying in the teeth of the wind, this mammal showed fight. Backing, circling, then darting ahead, so we baffled the monster, getting in a dart or two which caused blood to trickle over the top of his spout hole, a warning that the end was near. A few wild circles at a tremendous pace, rapid workings of gigantic jaws, blood pouring in streams from the spiracle, then a leap into space, and all was over. While the tail was slowly swishing from side to side in its last flurry, I gazed round seeking the other boats. No. 1 was flying away to windward, evidently fast to a whale. The second mate's boat was quietly pulling a catch towards the *Anna Lombard*. Their sport could not have been so keen as ours, their kill had been an easy one; one of those lucky chances, but Casey grumbled and said:

"Sure now, that's the second toime the second mate's boat 'as got in first. Ole Ark Royd must sure kill 'is fish with one blow."

I smiled, but as I gazed at our catch and its eighty-odd feet of carcase, I realised that a goodly portion of the precious liquid would be extracted from its cavity, and was satisfied.

Anxiously I watched the skipper's boat, for his whale had sounded, but in a few minutes it returned to the surface, receiving another harpoon from the Pirate, which finished it. We hauled alongside of our kill, cutting a hole in the flukes for the tow-rope. With a small piece of bunting attached to a lance, I made a flag, sticking it into the floating carcase as a guide for the pinnace, then ordered the mast to be resteped and the sail hoisted. Some distance away I saw the faint puffs of vapour which told me that the school had not dispersed, and as there was plenty of daylight, the possibilities of another kill were well worth the venture. It was a perfect afternoon. A five-knot breeze sent our boat over the swell, jumping from crest to crest with the ease and grace of a yacht. My boatmen had caught the spirit of the hunt, and as we had plenty of necessary equipment they were keen to add another whale to the day's work. Casey, with one eye on the main sheet and the other on his steering-oar, chanted a well-known whaling song. For the benefit of the reader I quote four verses:

*'Tis a hundred years, said the bos'n bold,  
 Since I was a lad at sea:  
 'Tis a hundred years, so I've been told,  
 And that's the truth, said he.*

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

*We sailed one day from Milford Bay  
The North Pole for to see,  
And we found it too, without much ado,  
And that's the truth, said he.*

*We sailed and sailed, and one fair morn  
A great whale we espied.  
So we took a rope and a long harpoon  
And stuck him in the starboard side;  
Then away and away went that great big whale,  
And away and away went we,  
Tied fast to his tail, to the North we did sail,  
And that's the truth, said he.*

*But when we came to the Great North Star  
An iceberg we did see.  
Says the captain, "Now we have come thus far,  
I'm not going back," said he.  
So we tickled the tail of the great big whale  
With a tenpenny nail, did we,  
And we sailed right through that iceberg blue,  
And that's the truth, said he.*

*And there the North Pole we did see,  
And we anchored the whale astern,  
But he gave us a whack that sent us back  
Or I mightn't have been spinning this yarn;  
So messmates all, said the bos'n bold,  
If the North Pole you would see,  
You've only to sail at the tail of a whale,  
And that's the truth, said he.*

Casey's song raised a laugh, but I was forced to call all hands to silence as we were drawing close to several

monsters that were apparently asleep, basking in the hot sunshine. The stroke oarsman drew my attention to the fact that a signal was being hoisted on the *Anna Lombard*, and I knew it was our recall. I could see the pinnacle making for our recent kill, which lay awash about two miles distant. The other boats were slowly towing their catches towards the ship, and I did not envy them their job of towing a carcase in the hot sun, for very little wind now stirred the atmosphere. Right ahead lay two sperm whale, so I decided that I was quite justified in not seeing the signal, and conned my boat silently towards our quarry. Cautiously we approached. There was scarcely enough wind to fill our sails, but Casey propelled the boat forward, and soon we were able to repeat our former tactics. This time I put more force and energy into the thrust, and down went the whale into the depths. When it returned to the surface we were prepared to meet it, and I wondered if we were in for another conflict. It turned and faced us, and I wondered why it had not set off in the teeth of the wind. I was disappointed as I watched the square nose turn towards us and saw the tiny eyes, ridiculously small for such a monster. The tail switched very gently, brushing the water from side to side. The fins extended moved slightly, rising and falling. Casey breathed in an undertone: "Sure, she's bewitched now!" The distance between us was some five hundred fathoms. I had never seen a harpooned whale act in this way before. I paused to watch, with extended hand to signal Casey, scarcely daring even to breathe. That short pause seemed an eternity, when the lives of us all hung upon the decision of this monarch of the deep, and for a

moment I experienced feelings of regret at not having obeyed the signal of recall. It is wonderful what thoughts pervade one's mind at such moments.

Then with one terrific plunge she sounded, but not into the depths, for as my eyes followed the white water I realised that her plan was to rise beneath our boat.

"Back all!" I cried excitedly. Never had I seen a whale act with such intelligence. "Starboard, Casey," and just in time we floated out of her course. She came to the surface some distance away with a tiny baby whale beside her. Its feeble respiration told us that it was very young, and I felt a spasm of guilt as we cautiously approached, stealing slowly towards the dam to finish her agony. Once more she turned and faced us. Then suddenly from her spiracle came a flow of blood and she rolled over and over in a vain endeavour to free herself from the harpoon. Her flurry was terrible. Never had I witnessed such a frightful death, and while the dam was plunging on the surface of the water, two sea-tigers, or killers, attacked the baby. We were helpless, and cut our line, backing away, for the mother rolled towards us creating a great sea as she came, and giving Casey considerable trouble in keeping the boat "head on" to the commotion, while we held our breath in amazement. It seemed as though we must surely be overwhelmed by the tremendous wall of water rolling towards us. There was no time to turn the boat. Back, back, we went with the wall of foam and the dying whale pursuing us, and just as I thought we would be completely submerged, she paused, and rolled in the opposite direc-

tion, then circled away from us at right angles. When we rose to the top of the swell, the baby whale was nowhere to be seen and the mother lay dead, her carcase just awash, like a half-hidden rock, on top of which were perched two birds.

Killers were plentiful when we arrived alongside the monster, and we found that already some of them had torn great lumps of blubber from her under sides, and attempts had been made to enter her mouth. We beat them off with blubber spades and darts, and I hoisted a pre-arranged signal, "Whale broached," so that the Captain might know the reason of our delay. We circled round our catch, but I knew that, now she had been broached, if we left her the inroads of the sea scavengers would cause her to sink and the contents of the cavity were too precious to lose. It was then that I saw the most gigantic ray of my whole experience. I have often seen these creatures rise from the ocean. The beauty of their colouring is lost to the human eye in their repulsive ugliness. The pectoral fins were extremely broad and marked with brilliant scarlet and deep blue spots. The flattened body was as black as the dead whale upon which it had come to feast, and as we watched it, Casey estimated it to be at least twenty feet across. When he pierced it with a lance it dived away into the depths followed by a flock of tiger sharks. The water was wonderfully transparent and we watched it sink, down, down to a tremendous depth, till it vanished into the darkness beyond sight of human eye. Fearing the return of the killers we were forced to watch our prize. The great portions of cuttlefish ejected from the stomach of this whale caused the scavengers and small fry to vanish, to



join the feast, but very shortly they returned, and we had to fight them off.

A glance towards the ship showed that she was some five miles distant. A line had been taken out to both the skipper's and the second mate's catch, and they were being warped, by means of the steam-winch, to the ship. The pinnacle had our first catch in tow, but we dare not leave our post, for every now and again some venturous shark approached the whale where the killers had torn away the tough hide. But death awaited them from a blubber spade.

As the sun approached the horizon the pinnacle steamed away from the ship to our assistance.

"We shall 'ave 'er alongside now before dark," said Casey, as he plunged a dart into an enormous man-eating shark.

"What a shame," said one of my boatmen, full of enthusiasm and admiration for the brilliant ever-changing colours that the swarm of fish presented. "What a shame that no picture has ever been taken of a swarm of fish round a carcase."

It was indeed one of the most beautiful sights I had ever seen, and the light appeared to be so placed that the wriggling mass of fish reflected every colour of the rainbow. The wind had died away as the sun set. There was not a ripple on the water, which seemed to become more transparent every moment. The glories of the sight held me spellbound. A tiny pilot fish (*Caranx*), its wonderful velvet-like skin flashing and sparkling, darted in and out of the mass, directing its lord and master, the man-eater, to the feast. Presently I saw my first razor-back whale at close quarters. Next to the killer (*Orca gladiator*) this species of whale

is pronounced the most ferocious. It is sometimes called the rorqual (*Rorqualus australis*). Now when this creature appeared on the scene a strange thing happened. (This is no exaggerated fish yarn, gentle reader, no cuffer!) Here were we, mounting guard over the wounded carcase of a sperm, the most dainty morsel—except the cuttlefish—of all fish life. In those still waters we were in a position calculated to cause the student of marine natural history to turn green with envy, and I wish my poor pen could do my story the justice that this portion particularly deserves. There was I with five other ignorant seamen, gazing upon a drama seldom seen by the eyes of mortal man.

The rorqual, which I estimated to be about thirty-five feet long, circled round us many times, as if undecided where to commence his attack. It was the strange formation of his extenuated dorsal fin—if it can be called a fin—that claimed my attention, and its massive head and jaws. This fin is a hard, very sharp bone formation with which it disembowels its victim, so said Casey, who had spent years in an American whaler in waters where these creatures were plentiful. It then occurred to me that every whaleboat should be armed with a revolver or a rifle, for by no other means is it possible to protect a broached carcase where sharks and other large fish abound.

Every fish had vanished with the coming of the razor-back. Even the nimble pilot-fish had cleared off. Casey remarked sorrowfully as he followed the movements of the stranger: "Sure now, Mr. Hedger, sir, we shall lose our catch, as sure as Father Peter landed in old Ireland."

Casey's irreverent remark passed unnoticed; we were

too fascinated with the scene, too intent on our purpose in striving to keep the razor-back from ripping open our floating carcass. Further, we were puzzled to know the reason of the disappearance of all the other fish.

"Maybe," remarked someone, "there is something about this visitor that the lesser fish do not like."

Presently the reason became apparent. One particular spot of the impenetrable depths assumed a silver whitish appearance, which at times became quite luminous, and very gradually we made out the waving arms of a giant cuttlefish. It gathered speed as it rose and I saw the awful eyes, which seemed to fix their gaze on me, holding me speechless and perfectly spellbound. I was quite unable to take my eyes off it, and my mind immediately went back to Madam S—— and our talk of this monster, on the terrace of her house in Valparaiso. The waving tentacles and long snake-like arms, each with their rows of suckers, claimed my attention. As they waved upwards I could see them opening and shutting in anticipation of a feast. The body would be about twenty feet across the middle, but great portions of heaving flesh seemed to incase the joints, or sockets of the arms and tentacles, giving it greater massiveness. For ugliness, nothing that the morbid imagination of man has ever invented can compare with this pulsating horror. I speculated in my mind as to which would fall a victim to the tentacles—our whaleboat, the floating carcass, or the razor-back; and although these thoughts flashed through my brain I made no attempt to order my men to pull out of the danger zone. We were all more or less hypnotised and helpless.

Now I must say something of the razor-back. We had made several attempts to beat it off, and each time it had dived under the carcase, tearing huge mouthfuls of blubber from the stomach, and evading our harpoon as though accustomed to such sport; but as the cuttlefish came closer, it too came under the spell of the waving arms, or was it the fixed gaze of the eyes and the rows of teeth which protruded from the strange-looking jaws, resembling in appearance a collection of parrots' beaks, or crab claws? Presently, with one mighty spring, it seized the razor-back, not anywhere near the dorsal formation, but round the small of the tail and neck. Then the water became impregnated with the sepia which this vile thing ejects, and secure in the entwining embrace of the great octopus the rorqual was carried to the depths below.

When the water cleared all signs of the tragedy had vanished, but we still gazed into the silence, until the toot of the pinnace broke the spell.

"By the Holy——," said the bowman nervously, "that was a close call. Lucky for us the razor-back came along or we might be making a trip to Davy Jones' locker, cuddled in the fond embrace of that slimy squid."

"Those eyes!" said another with a shiver, "I reckon I'll see them in my sleep until I die!"

The work of conveying our catch to the ship kept us busy for a while, but the afternoon's experience made us all more or less silent. We scarcely exchanged two words as we sat smoking our pipes, gazing into the starlight night, thoughtful and silent.

As the moon was full, work commenced at once. Mooring chains were passed round the carcase to hold

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

her to the ship. Joe Splendid descended to the back of the whale to insert the nozzle of the hosepipe into the cavity. The pump commenced operations, forcing the precious spermaceti into the storage tanks. By this arrangement two whales were handled at once.

Captain Lombard questioned me concerning the broaching of the mother sperm, and when I explained all that had taken place, he was deeply interested. He cautioned me about taking unnecessary risks, but appreciated the fact of the fourth carcass, reminding me that three whales were about as many as could be conveniently handled. That was the reason for the recall signal being hoisted. However, it would be interesting to see whether our plant was capable of putting through the contents of four cavities.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SHANGHAI MARTHA

AS I sat in the luxurious saloon enjoying the good things provided for the evening meal, it was difficult to realise that I was in a whaling-ship with four dead whales alongside being "tryed out" in the most unorthodox manner ever dreamed of; for the medical staff discussed rather freely certain facts about the new pumps and machinery, from which I gathered that the plant was working to their satisfaction. Strange as it may seem, I could not dismiss from my mind the experience of the afternoon. The eyes of the gigantic squid haunted me; from out of the shadows those staring eyes would gaze at me, giving me a thrill of horror, and I was glad to reach the deck-house, where work in plenty awaited me. I realised that little sleep could be expected while the tanks held spermaceti. The ocean scavengers were very numerous and savage. A boat's crew was constantly employed killing sharks and lesser fish that swarmed round the carcasses in hundreds.

The feathered tribes did not bother us so very much. Sometimes they became a nuisance, swarming on board in untold numbers, but a man with a bamboo rod could easily cope with them. It was amusing to see some wise old bird settle on the hide of the monster and peck away at the tough skin, hoping to get at the blubber which instinct told him lay underneath. It was

also wonderful how they found us and where they came from. When we first sighted the whales and made our first kill there was not a bird to be seen, but very gradually they seemed to muster from out of the void in anticipation of a feast, and as time passed their numbers increased until the sea all around us was literally alive with the squealing, fighting mob, representing every species of bird that haunts those latitudes. What they did not understand was why no dainty morsels of blubber or flesh fell from our spades and knives. They floated in clusters, or chattering groups, no doubt arguing in bird language upon the possibility of the feast commencing later. Some ventured, as I say, to perch on a carcase determined to help themselves, only to fall victims to the bamboo rod of the watchful seamen.

There were a few representatives of the Antarctic regions, the mollymawk and the shag, also one or two cape pigeons, but the common gull predominated. The saucy little Mother Carey's chicken, the storm petrel, walked about the carcase unmolested by the seaman; he would not hurt or drive away one of these dainty birds for all the gold in the Indies.

The full moon rendered flare lights unnecessary. Hour after hour the noise of the machinery mingled with the cry of the birds. The bell in the 'tween decks told the number of casks filled; the medical staff, now in full charge of the proceedings, were silent as usual, but apparently happy.

I took my place in No. 3 whaleboat to help subdue the scavengers, which was no easy task. As fast as one was slashed with a blubber spade, another took its place in the fighting-line, and it was as well that the signal

came to haul ahead in the place vacated by the first whale; another hour of such treatment and the dead whale would sink and the spermaceti be lost. The casting adrift of those two carcasses caused most of the scavengers to desert us, and for a while we were left in peace.

It fell to me to insert the nozzle into the cavity of the third whale, and for the first time in my life I stood on the back of a dead whale. It was a strange, uncanny sensation, and a feeling of exultation consumed me. The most gigantic creature in the sea had been killed by me—insignificant me. The reader will excuse me when I say that I swelled with pride at my victory. The nozzle was a brass tube perforated with a series of holes, on top of which was a flange attachment to which the socket of a canvas hosepipe was screwed. The blubber of the cavity was pierced with a blubber orger, and when the nozzle was inserted the upper flange pressed down and prevented an inrush of water. The spermaceti was then pumped out into the tanks on the deck-house. For safety reasons, a bos'n's chair on a gantline hung over the ship's side, but as there was little sea, one could hang on to a life-line and control the nozzle with greater comfort.

My task accomplished, I closely examined the skin between the nose and the spiracle. There were several very large impressions—indentures which told of some recent encounter with a gigantic cuttlefish. On the outside edge of one of these were a number of bruises where the terrible claws of the tooth-like suckers had penetrated the hide.

"What's that sticking up t'other side?" asked one of my boatmen. I worked my way aft, and saw the



broken shaft of a harpoon. There were long scars and openings in the hide which spoke of wounds apparently of long standing; elongated white or bluish-grey streaks appeared as the great body rose and fell with the motion of the ship. In the moonlight these scars were like silver bands.

"Hand me a blubber knife," I said to one of the men who was watching me. The harpoon shaft was not one of ours, and while I am writing upon this subject I must say a few words about the harpoons used by the *Anna Lombard*.

These were an invention of Captain Lombard. The idea was a distinct improvement on the old type of weapon so familiar to whalers. It was a shaft of hard steel with a square, hollow, knife-like head containing a triangular-shaped inner knife hidden in a groove and working on a centre-pin which was kept in position by a steel spring. When this weapon entered the blubber the spring forced the inner knife forward, and a pull on the line drove it home crosswise. The steel shaft terminated in a socket into which was fitted a short lance-wood handle. It was a handy and yet the most deadly weapon ever seen by any of the experienced hands on the ship, and they were all enthusiastic about its utility.

The object mentioned by the sailor was certainly a broken harpoon, and I decided to dig it out when the cavity had been emptied. At eight bells in the middle watch the pumps ceased to suck. The nozzle was withdrawn, but the work of refining continued, the sleepy men cursing the crew of No. 3 boat for introducing another whale; but the crew retorted that the prize money was worth the sacrifice of a few hours' sleep,

and there the matter ended, but I certainly determined to strictly adhere to the specified programme in future.

Before casting off the mooring chains I scrambled along the carcase, and an additional life-line having been made fast to the main rigging, I commenced to hack away the blubber, cutting out great chunks and casting them into a group of screaming birds whom I knew would appreciate the feast. The harpoon I sought was firmly imbedded in the flesh and must have been a source of much annoyance and pain to the creature. It was very evident that every attempt had been made to shake off the stinging weapon, for the wooden staff was worn completely down to the socket. I also cut away a number of suckers. This strange, black, leech-like fish, is called the lump-fish because, I suppose, it resembles lumps of black flesh which adhere to the hide of a whale. I have seen this parasite attached to the shark.

I withdrew the harpoon. It was an antiquated weapon of a type used by American whalers a generation ago.

"What are you doing, young man?" asked Mr. Haskell, looking over the rail. I handed him the weapon, then scrambled into the main-chains.

"There is no hope of getting at our harpoon," I said, "but that old thing is a curio. Perhaps there is a name and date on it."

It was not an unusual thing in those days for a harpoon to be stamped with a ship's name and date of manufacture, and I was interested in my find.

We cast off the mooring chains as dawn broke in the eastern sky. The carcase then drifted astern amidst a chorus of delight from the birds. I knew the whale

would soon sink, for I had cut deep into the flesh to secure the old harpoon. Further, the ocean scavengers were already at work, so there was no need to fear that the mountain of blubber would become a menace to shipping.

A very light breeze danced over the sea as the sun rose above the horizon, and when all sail was set, and the craft placed on her course, the watch went below, where I recorded in my log-book that twenty-four hours as being the most strenuous during my service in the *Anna Lombard*.

The strange harpoon was a clumsy-looking weapon. On the cross-head we noticed the name of a Yankee ship that must have passed out of service many years before. Captain Lombard remembered her, for during the days of his youth and early seafaring career that old whaler was very notorious, being known to old hands as the "Boston slaughter-house." Her captain had the reputation of being a devil incarnate, who scarcely ever made a voyage without killing a man, certainly not without kidnapping a crew, for men refused to sail with him. The Captain entertained us with a yarn about this famous Boston bully, which threw some light upon conditions in whaling-ships in the decade known as the golden fifties. It may perhaps interest the reader.

It happened that the ship in question, during the middle fifties, was forced to shelter in the harbour of San Francisco to refit after a very rough handling in a mid-Pacific cyclone. As soon as the anchor was down, all the crew deserted to seek their fortunes in the goldfields; for about this time excitement ran high. The Yankee skipper stumped the country, assembling

a collection of evil characters: gamblers, escaped convicts, thieves, murderers and gunmen. It was said that after his ship had put to sea, several bad men were conspicuous by their absence from the city of the golden west. On the day appointed for sailing the captain discovered that he was four men short of his complement, so he set off to China-town to a certain drug store and made sundry purchases. He then went to a well-known sailors' boarding-house, a house of evil repute, and interviewed the proprietress, a woman of notorious fame. Captain Lombard said she was a huge, raw-boned, fiery-headed Irishwoman of some fifty summers. She could fell an ox with a blow of her fist, which she used like a prize-fighter. She was known as Sacramento Martha. The captain of the whaler handed her a packet purchased from a Chinese dispenser of drugs, with the remark: "See to it, Martha dear, that the men are on board before midnight."

Of course, some money changed hands, and when the men arrived they were conveyed, stupefied with vile whisky, to the den called the forecastle. One of the men turned out to be a famous politician on a visit to San Francisco from Washington. How the pimps and agents got hold of him was never discovered, and perhaps it was wise not to make investigation. This man made it pretty warm for the captain of the whaler when he arrived at his final port of call. A few years later, so ran Captain Lombard's yarn, the ship returned to San Francisco and the captain determined to be revenged upon Sacramento Martha. By some means best known to himself he managed to administer to her some narcotic drug, and had her conveyed on

board his ship, clad in a suit of dirty blue overalls. He then sailed through the Golden Gate with her majesty the queen of the sailors' boarding-house fast asleep in the forecabin. Captain Lombard's language in describing this part of the story was very picturesque. I will not attempt to reproduce his description of that good lady's rage. He told us how she fought the captain like a man, and when the mate tried to interfere, she picked him up in her fond embrace and quietly dropped him over the side. She smacked the face of the second mate, and that worthy decided to offer no further resistance. Then she turned again to the captain, and would surely have killed him had she not remembered that upon him rested the navigation of the ship and her return to San Francisco. But she refused to permit him to re-enter the cabin where he hastened to secure firearms. She searched his berth and took possession of the arms chest, then, walking the poop deck like a savage tigress, called all hands aft and promised every man twenty dollars and an easy ship, or an outfit for the goldfields, if they sailed the ship back into the harbour. For the next twenty-four hours she commanded the ship, taking neither food nor rest, and when at last they lay safely anchored, she turned on the skipper with a loaded gun, telling him she was going to blow his brains out. But she only played with him long enough to prove what a coward he was, and having put the fear of God in his heart, she tossed the gun overboard, and then gave him the soundest thrashing he ever had. Then, leaving him senseless on the deck, she ordered all hands on shore to her boarding-house.

The famous lady was spoken of by old-time shell-

## SHANGHAI MARTHA

backs with great pride and reverence. Her exploit survived her for many years, and as Shanghai Martha she has passed into history as one of the most famous ladies of the Pacific slope.

## CHAPTER XIX

### RIGHT WHALES

OUR progress northward during the next three days was very slow, and we made only one hundred and fifty miles in that period. But as the weather was decidedly warm and congenial, we looked forward to very soon falling in with the south-east trade winds and the sunshine of the tropics.

All hands were busy bending fine-weather sails, setting up rigging and fixing new chafing-gear. At the same time a sharp look-out was kept for whales by the man in the crow's-nest. This look-out station was my favourite resort. Whenever possible, I scrambled aloft at the first signs of dawn, and there alone watched the sun rise in all its splendour. Situated above the deck a hundred and fifty feet, one seemed to be the centre of a circle of immense dimensions. Imagine a perfect, cloudless daybreak, with the sun creeping over the horizon like a golden streak slowly developing into a great fireball, in a sky of exquisite blue which is reflected by the sea until it appears to be part of it. The brilliant pathway across the rolling space is the only distinguishing line between sky and water. Sometimes, as I gazed upon that slowly changing picture, I felt as though my soul would burst with joy and admiration. During all the years that I witnessed these glories I never once grew tired of their loveliness. In some

## RIGHT WHALES

ships in which I had previously served there was little time for nature worship. If one appeared to be interested in any unusual happening some sarcastic remark was made. I well remember, on one particular voyage, standing for a while to admire some glorious cloud effect—a sunset which predicted a hurricane. During the work of reducing sail I had the audacity to pause and gaze at the many-tinted storm clouds. The mate saw me, and quickly reminded me that I had signed on as an able seaman, not a ——— passenger.

No whales were seen during this period of light winds, but on the fourth day, when the wind freshened to a steady six-knot breeze, several Right whales were seen sporting on the horizon. These whales are easily distinguished by a practical whaler, as they possess two blowholes. When they were reported the doctors appeared on the poop deck, and a long discussion ensued as to the utility of their oil for medical purposes. Had we possessed ways and means of extracting the oil from their blubber, some attempts would have been made to catch them.

I saw Doctors Brennan and Schwartz walking the poop, while Captain Lombard and the Professor were seated in deck-chairs. The conversation lapsed into German—no doubt they were discussing technical details of some scheme for the capture and boiling down of the blubber of whales other than the sperm, and my suspicions were confirmed when, during the dog watch, Mr. Haskell informed me that improvised “try works” would be made from one of the recently purchased tanks.

Next morning the forward end of the ship resembled an iron-founder’s shop, and Ivan the carpenter



was in his glory, for his inventive genius was given full scope, and it was indeed wonderful to see how his knowledge of engineering evolved from a square tank two very useful boilers which answered the purpose as well as any elaborate, expensively built "try works."

"What about your Carney ship now, Mr. Hedger?" said the sailmaker, with a sarcastic glance through the open hatchway. "I told you to wait and see what happened in the Pacific!"

"Do you think the introduction of 'try works' and the catching of Right whales will make the *Anna Lombard* Carney ship?" I returned with a laugh. I was growing rather weary of Jones' morbid view of every turn of events. Rather than wade into a long discussion on coming calamities, I endeavoured to turn the conversation, but it was useless. I was forced to endure a lecture on the vicissitudes of certain ships and their masters that had from time to time come under his notice.

That some of the crew resented the hunting of Right whales was very evident, for as the hammers sounded throughout the day there was a certain amount of grumbling. But Joe Splendid reminded them that they had signed on a whaler; that according to the articles they had agreed to conform to the ship's regulations, and accomplish any task in connection with their calling that the leader of the expedition desired. It is pleasing to record that the majority of the men entered into the spirit of the work with great enthusiasm, reminding the growlers that every whale caught meant additional bonus, and if a little more work was entailed by the capture and boiling down of Right whale, what mattered! There were times when the voyage was like a

yachting trip. Further, one might go to sea for another thousand years and not find a master who paid hotel bills for common sailors.

The reader may perhaps wonder why I have used the term "Right" whales. As Casey remarked, "As if all whales are not Right whales!"

This species of the whale family is split up into many branches by the naturalist, or, as a very old sea captain of my acquaintance once called these learned gentlemen, "intellectual busybodies who endow every living creature, ashore and afloat, with unpronounceable names." This dear old sea-father's proverb, when speaking of the scientific classification of the whale family, was: "As a bird is known by his whistle, so is a whale known by his spout!" As I say, there are many branches of this family. I will not attempt to numerate them, but will request the reader not to confuse the Right whale of Baffin's Bay or Greenland fame with the huge migratory monster of the Pacific. This wonderful creature is known to science under the general heading of *Balaena australis*. In Pacific waters it is fairly plentiful in spite of the fact that, since about the year 1775, when it might be said the whaling industry was inaugurated, to the time of which I write, many hundreds of thousands of these creatures must have been slaughtered. (I take my statement here, not from deep-sea legend or hearsay, but from that well-known authority on whaling, Captain Scammon, who says that, from the latter date to about the year 1846, the number of ships engaged exceeded 730. At this period, according to his figures, 70,000,000 dollars were invested and 70,000 people derived their chief support from the whaling interests.)

It was this particular whale we met with one beautiful morning when the *Anna Lombard* was seeking to fascinate the undecided south-east trade winds into something like a steady breeze. The reader may wonder why I used the term "fascinate," and question how a ship can fascinate the wind.

I can assure you that no more glorious picture of man's ingenuity exists on this planet than a full-rigged sailing-ship decked out in all her flaxen glory. It has ever been the custom, when negotiating the subtropics and the regions of the trade winds, to coax them into usefulness by dressing the yards "peacock fashion"—in seafaring phraseology.

"There she blows!" yelled the man aloft in the crow's-nest. "Right whale on the port quarter!"

They were evidently coming up with the wind. All light sails were immediately stowed and the ship put upon a course which would enable her to stand across the lee of the school, which could be seen spouting in goodly numbers as far as the eye could see, right across the skyline.

Ark Royd remarked as he threw the falls of his boat to the deck, previous to lowering: "I'm not a bit surprised to see that big school, because I have noticed whale-feed floating around since dawn."

This was the tiny mollusc or celphalopod that is quite invisible to the layman. It is so transparent it seems to form part of the water, for it reflects the sunlight, producing every colour imaginable, and it takes the experienced eye of a whaler to discover it.

Then came the order, "Away, whalers!" a cry which filled me with eagerness, and one which I often long to

## RIGHT WHALES

hear again. But alas, those days have gone, leaving only the thrill of a very pleasant memory.

There was just enough wind to warrant stepping the masts, and when my boat touched the water I gave orders to go away on the starboard tack, as I had noticed that the school was advancing in crescent formation, spreading over an enormous distance. The whole horizon from east to west seemed alive with the leisurely moving monsters. It was a long and tedious journey. I adopted all kinds of tricks to coax my boat ahead of the others, but to no purpose. The second mate's boat surged ahead. The Pirate, from the bow, suggestively offered a tow-rope. The Captain's boat had sought to attack the herd by taking the other angle on the port tack.

As usual the second mate got fast first, but while I was inwardly cursing my luck, up came a monster quite close to our boat, and I immediately plunged my harpoon. This was quickly followed by another from the bowman, and instead of sounding, the whale flurried. We backed away, but there was no need for alarm, for the mammal gave one leap out of the water, descending with a loud flop and drenching us with spray, then gave up the ghost. It was one of the easiest kills imaginable.

As I stuck a flag into the carcase, the usual signal for the pinnace, I was struck by the absence of the dorsal fin, or the strange hump of the sperm. This monster was perfectly smooth and possessed a head which appeared to be about one-third of the whole length of the body, and a huge mouth which extended almost to the eyes. From the two blowholes there still trickled blood and water. The body was black with a bluish

tint here and there, vanishing into a mass of grey streaks on the under part.

The pinnace came speeding towards our prize, and I saw that both the other boats had secured a whale. I had been strictly cautioned not to attempt a second kill, but certainly was not satisfied with the morning's sport. Casey remarked:

"Sure now, if this whale is called a Right whale, thin I prefer a wrong whale. A fighting man and a fighting whale are creatures after me own 'eart!"

We sat smoking complacently, the only movement being the long Pacific swell. The heat and the inactivity were somewhat depressing; not even a bird came to disturb our peace. The ship lay about three miles distant with yards aback, but as there was no wind she seemed to be enveloped in smoke from the donkey-engine and pumping machinery.

We secured the tow-line of the pinnace to the flukes of our catch and towed towards the ship. When close enough the pinnace cast off and shot ahead, returning with a hauling-line. The steam-winch quickly warped the carcase under the staging, and we secured it to the swinging boom. Three men on the staging with blubber-spades, a gantline from the foreyard, and great lengths of blubber were hacked out and hoisted on board. It was now that the birds and ocean scavengers got busy. It was wonderful how quickly the task was accomplished. So different from my last whaling-ship, where steam power was but a dream and the work of stripping a carcase a slave's job.

Once the blubber was on deck it was hacked to pieces and tossed into the "try pot," from which the boiling oil was pumped into the cooling-tank on top of the

deck-house. At last we were a real whaler, with all hands working like galley-slaves.

The Professor took samples of the oil, both before and after it had been medically treated, and conveyed them to his cabin. Then he returned to the deck, and with notebook in hand for a while watched the proceedings, occasionally making records of whatever took his fancy. Presently he requested that the massive head be hoisted on deck for examination, and he instructed Joe Splendid how to behead the creature, as he wished to scientifically investigate the whalebone.

I pricked up my ears. I, too, wished to inspect that strange formation within the mouth of the toothless whale, for on my previous whaling voyage I had never seen a Right whale caught. Captain N—— of the *B——* had been instructed by his owners to concentrate his attention on the sperm, and this he faithfully did. During the whole two years that the voyage lasted we did not attempt to capture any other, though the Right type of cetacean seemed to be more plentiful than the sperm.

When the great head descended to the deck I placed a man at the try works with a wire strainer to skim off the inevitable scum which always forms on the top of boiling whale oil, being portions of sinewy matter which eventually becomes fuel for the furnace, and under the Professor's direction I took my first lesson in the anatomy of nature's greatest creation. I am afraid I did not work very scientifically, for from time to time I was requested not to damage this, that, or the other portion. What did we, whose functions were to literally tear away the blubber from the flesh for the oil it contained, care or know about the scientific struc-

ture of a whale? One might as well request a savage to pause in his cannibal feast and repeat the scientific names of his victim's bones. Such words as *premaxilla*, for upper jaw-bone, and *maxilla*, for lower jaw-bone, or *mandible*, which signifies the whole of the jaw in scientific parlance, were all so much Dutch to the average whaleman in those days. The climax was reached when the Professor, dancing round the deck and wringing his hands in abject grief, with tears streaming down his face, announced that Joe Splendid had completely ruined the *occipital* bones by his unscientific method of execution.

The most interesting features of this specimen were the double blowhole and the whalebone. The blowholes, or spiracles, through which the creature breathes, are situated on top of the head. In Right whales they are some distance away behind the immediate front of the head, but the sperm has a single orifice on the extreme end of the snout. The blowing or spouting of a whale is, of course, the act of respiration. It takes place as the whale comes to the surface, or just below, after an immersion more or less prolonged. This operation has been grossly misrepresented from time to time by various writers and painters, especially in the olden days, and it seems strange in these enlightened times to think that only a few decades ago there were many seafaring men who believed that a whale could spout a sufficient stream of water to overwhelm a large ship. I do not wish to deliberately disturb the mind of any person who believes in the possibility of such an occurrence, but as I cut away the skin round the blowholes of that particular seventy-foot whale, using the knife as directed by the Professor who stood close

by, blood- and oil-bespattered like a master butcher, I dispelled for all time from my mind the stories I had heard concerning the blowing powers of the Right whale.

Later on in life, when studying this question, I was not surprised to learn that a certain German professor, by anatomical demonstration, had proved very clearly—almost in the same way as we had done—that the whale could not spout forth a large volume of water. What actually happens is this. The water which accompanies the blow is the water disturbed by the commencement of the act, and the volume is regulated by the depth at which the act first takes place.

To gain a good view of the whalebone it was necessary to turn the head on its side, which was no easy task, but with the assistance of the winch we managed to accomplish this to our satisfaction. The Professor sketched the head as it lay with its mouth closed, then with a block and tackle we triced open the mouth and a strange sight met our gaze.

Long blades of whalebone depended from the palate in systematic rows in a mouth that was tremendous and cavernous. This is the whalebone so familiar to the corset-maker and dressmaker for generations. Some blades in the centre were fully seven feet long and of a bluish-black tint, which gradually shaded into a smoke grey as they diminished in length towards either the throat or the lips. The length and density of the baleen provides a perfect strainer, and naturally prevents any object too large to enter. When the mouth is closed the long, slender, brush-like ends of the whalebone fold back, the front ones passing below the hinder ones, in a groove, between the tongue and the



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lower jaw. When the mouth is open their elasticity enables them to stiffen, so no matter what distance the mouth is open the strainer remains perfect.

The arrangement is perfected by a protruding flesh-like pad along the lower lip, which prevents the flexible ends of the baleen from overflowing the mouth as the water rushes out. The tongue is a mass of spongy fat and sinewy flesh. Portions of the whalebone were cut out and kept as souvenirs, and I might say in passing that my piece was an object of admiration and interest to many of my friends for years after I had left the sea.

The chug-chug of the pinnace towing another carcase claimed our attention, and Captain Lombard climbed up the gangway, informing us that he had secured a freak of a whale which roared like thunder as it flurried. It possessed a horn of solid ivory which protruded from the top of its head, a double tail, two very long pectoral or breast fins, an extenuated dorsal fin, and a head shaped like that of a sperm with an enormous mouth armed with two rows of formidable teeth on the upper and lower jaws.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE "SANTA BARBARA"

WHEN discussing the task of writing this story, I suggested to some of my learned friends the advisability of omitting the facts which form the major portion of the first four or five pages of this chapter, for fear of trespassing too much upon the reader's credulity. It was then pointed out that when one considers the many wonderful discoveries made by science and the unearthing of so many hitherto hidden secrets of nature, there appears to be some truth in the well-known saying that the myth of yesterday may be the truth of to-morrow. I was also reminded that from ancient times it has been believed that the depths of the ocean is the home of many unknown monsters, the very thought of which terrifies the human mind. Our forefathers have left records describing these monsters, which modern science has endeavoured to classify into some kind of order, at the same time explaining that they are the descendants of creatures which inhabited this planet during some previous age. Be that as it may, I write only of what came under my notice and, taking my friends' advice, tell my story in full.

The mammal captured by the Captain was indeed a strange creature, being neither a sperm nor a member of the family of Right whales. It may have been related to the rorqual, for by its peculiar dorsal fin it

closely resembled a razor-back; or it may have been a member of the beaked species to which the narwhal belongs. Where did it get its horn which protruded from the top of the head like the tusk of a walrus, only, instead of pointing downwards, it ascended about five feet, tapering to a round, blunt-ended point, the base being about four inches thick? The length over-all was fifty-seven feet. The scientific party suggested that it was a specimen of a creature often mentioned as a sea-unicorn, which I thought a most appropriate name. On each side of the head, just beneath the eyes to the pectoral fins, hung a mass of black hair, much coarser and stiffer than horsehair. In texture it resembled the fibres of baleen of the Right whale's sieve apparatus, and Casey respectfully suggested to Professor Lun that the creature be called "Whiskers."

The double tail created much interest, both parts working independently for about twenty feet from the centre of the body. They were decorated with tail fins like those of the man-eating shark (*Carcharias melanopterus*).

The Captain stated that this strange creature had sunk his capture. It appears that just as his harpooned whale commenced to flurry, lashing the water into a maelstrom of white waves, the weird monster suddenly appeared and drove his long horn into the stomach of the whale with a noise like the roaring of a mad bull. For a while the horn remained fixed, the Pirate sent his weapon into the intruder's body, quickly following with several darts, which resulted in the stranger's death. The heaving of the ocean swell and the struggles of the monster caused the carcase of the whale to float away and sink.

## THE "SANTA BARBARA"

It was decided to sever the head of the Captain's prize for closer examination. There was very little blubber; indeed the layers of fat beneath the tough hide were so thin they were scarcely visible in places, so it was not considered worth while to proceed with the stripping. The head provided about seventy gallons of medicated spermaceti, which proved that this creature was more of a sperm than anything else.

The horn was severed at the root and placed in the saloon as a souvenir. The double rows of teeth in each jaw caused much comment, but whatever scientific data were discovered by the medical staff I never knew, for their conversation was carried on in German.

All through the next twenty-four hours the crew continued to toil, stopping only to partake of food. All this time the working of the refining plant made the ship vibrate, rendering sleep impossible, and the noise of filling and heading up casks added to the clatter. For three days this refining and filling was extended without a moment's pause. The doctors working in their secret chambers appeared only at lengthy intervals to eat and smoke, and when at last the job was finished, it was decided to seek no more Right whales, as this catch had given us a hundred and two barrels of oil which had been medically treated, and while not up to the standard of pure spermaceti, it was of considerable value. One strange feature about this material I can vouch for. After working through a double watch without sleep, it was almost impossible to work through the third watch of four long hours without resting the eyes, so a few men who showed signs of fatigue were sent below. It was then that Peter Haskell asked me

to taste the refined whale oil, and it had a most stimulating effect upon me.

"Is this the medicated spermaceti?" I questioned.

"Yes," he returned, "drink it and tell me what effect it has on you."

I must state here that at this period of my life I was in a most vigorous state of health—one might say a perfect specimen of healthy humanity upon whom a few hours' extra work could have no effect, but the strenuous labour of trying-out was beginning to tell upon me, and I was willing to admit that I was tired. I glanced at the amber-tinted oil, suspiciously inhaling it, and liked the sweet-scented aroma. I looked at my chief; he certainly was in earnest, so I drank it down. It clung to my tongue and palate pleasantly, filling the breath with its sweet essence, and seeming to stimulate the blood with renewed activity. The tired feeling very gradually left me, and after a while I felt fully restored to my former vigour. Returning to the saloon table, I partook of a meal which enabled me to return to duty ready to continue the task indefinitely.

"You have absorbed into your system some of the terrific energy of the deep-sea monsters," said Mr. Haskell with a smile. "The Professor assures me that by his method of refining spermaceti and whale oil it becomes most invigorating, restoring lost energy and permanently curing some of the worst cases of consumption. He says it is the very elixir of life."

This was quite feasible and not beyond my comprehension, for on former voyages I had visited the Behring Sea, and in some of the coast towns and villages had admired the fine physique and healthy appearance of some of the inhabitants whose favourite food was

whale flesh and oil. The Eskimo knows its value, and he will gorge himself on raw blubber in the same way as an Englishman does on roast beef and plum pudding. But, whereas the roast beef and plum pudding may be detrimental to the digestive organs of the Englishman, the chunks of raw blubber consumed by the native of the North Pacific wilds supplies him with a wonderful amount of energy.

The merits of the Professor's invention was demonstrated clearly on the morning of the second day, when an hour's respite was called. Professor Lun went forward and lectured to the men, who listened attentively, one and all electing to sample the material, which they pronounced extremely stimulating. There were no more caustic remarks concerning the doings in the laboratory, for they realised that they were pioneers in the production of a wonderful restorative, of which much was likely to be heard in the future. Even the pessimistic sailmaker waxed eloquent in its praises.

After the mess was cleared away and the ship assumed her former yacht-like appearance, we jogged along quietly for the next two days till we picked up the south-east trades, enabling us at times to log nine knots. Everyone was extremely good-tempered. I thought the unusual display of friendliness on the part of the medical staff was due to the successful demonstration of their invention and the value of the cargo stowed away in the hold. If it was true, as Ivan Domeroff, the carpenter, stated, that each barrel was worth one thousand pounds sterling, what would a full cargo be worth?

On this particular evening the scientific party sat on the poop under the awning; the stewards had pro-

duced whisky and cigars, and these, together with the gentle movements of the ship, set the Captain's tongue wagging. He told us a story of the *Anna Lombard's* early career as a coolie ship. There was a proud, merry twinkle in his eye as he glanced up at the bulging sails, then overside to the milk-white wake, saying:

"At the end of the summer of 1840 we lay at anchor in the Nanking Gulf waiting to complete our number of passengers. How many of those coolies had been induced to make the voyage under false promises we did not stop to consider. How many poor coolies were actually kidnapped we did not care. We had been engaged to carry 2,000 Chinese men and women to a Californian port; to get them there as quickly as possible, a bonus being allowed for every coolie safely landed. The Chinese Government protested against this traffic, and in passing I might tell you that it was this question, with others, which caused war between the Chinese and the British. About this time the British Government decided to send a fast cruiser to Chinese waters, as the Chinese were retaliating by intercepting many tea clippers and other merchant craft. Many stories of this form of piracy reached England and at last she was roused to action. H.M.S. *Tiger* was despatched with instructions to capture the *Anna Lombard*, which in those days was known as the —."

"I must tell you, gentlemen," said the Captain, gazing at his audience as if to excuse himself in the eyes of his Chinese friend Kong, who lounged in a deck-chair enjoying a cigar, "that at this time of my life I was young and burning for adventure, and a voyage to Chinese waters in this ship was very welcome——"

"Please don't apologise, Captain," said Kong with a

smile. "The Peking Government used the coolie traffic to remove a great many political opponents, and it was only after they were exposed that protest was made to the European powers, because, by mistake, a prominent and popular Mandarin had been kidnapped and secretly shipped to America."

"Anyway," continued the Captain, "news reached the captain of this ship that the *Tiger* had arrived and lay in waiting outside the heads at Nanking. So, having a full ship, the skipper decided, under cover of a moonlight night, to repaint the *Anna Lombard* to represent a tea clipper. At daybreak the job was finished and as many of the crew as could be spared dressed themselves as ladies, in clothes borrowed from Chinese women. With a fair wind the *Anna Lombard* sailed through the heads, where lay the cruiser with guns run out and her crew at morning quarters. As we passed within a quarter of a mile our 'lady passengers' walked the poop deck with others of our crew all dolled up in their best shore clothing. We made a fine show as we left the anchorage flying the number of the tea clipper *Tai ping*. All sail was set to the three topsails and the topgallant yards were being swayed aloft as we dipped our flags to the *Tiger*, who in return fired a gun and hoisted the signal, 'Heave to, I'm coming on board with letters.'

"'No, you don't,' answered our skipper—or flags to that effect. The old gentleman was a west-of-England man and he loved a naval man as the devil loves holy water, so he gave orders to sway aloft the royals and sky-sails. Immediately our lady passengers vanished, and soon the ship was a cloud of canvas. The *Tiger* slipped her cable and there commenced a race for the



open sea, which even now thrills me with admiration for the grand old man who sailed the *Anna Lombard* in those far-away days," said our skipper reminiscently.

"I must tell you," he continued, "that this ship carried a long gun. It was secured to the poop deck on the site now occupied by the charthouse. If you look at the deck-line of the combings of the companion-way you will still see the gun plates." Peter Haskell drew my attention to these plates as I walked athwart the poop deck listening to the story.

"There was no doubt about the sailing powers of either ship," went on the Captain, "but when they spoke of the *Tiger* being the smartest corvette in the British Navy they spoke the truth, for she quickly outpaced us. We must have looked a picture, for we carried stunsails below and aloft, but the warship came up hand over hand until a shot from one of her guns went clean through our mainsail. The skipper calmly ordered our gun to be uncovered. I did not think that he would allow his hatred for his country's navy to carry him as far as firing at one of 'Auntie's ships' (as the Queen's ships were called by merchantmen in those days). When the gun was loaded the skipper took deliberate aim and his shot went through the fore topsail, bringing down the main topgallant mast, yards and sails, and before the warship could recover, crash went another shot and down came her foreyard, leaving the topsail hanging limp, flying away without support from the sheets, which very soon smashed it from the bolt-ropes. The *Tiger* then sheered off and fired a broadside, but not one shot struck us." Captain Lombard lay back in his deck-chair and lovingly stroked the rounded taff-rail. One would have thought he was caressing the woman

of his affection. But while he was very proud of her accomplishments he was not proud of the act of piracy of her captain.

"It was lucky that the skipper was such a remarkably fine gunner," he said; "but I might tell you, gentlemen, that for many years after I had ceased to be one of this ship's junior navigating officers I kept my secret, not daring to reveal the fact that at one time I had been a member of the crew of a coolie ship; although at this end of my life I am exceedingly proud to captain the *Anna Lombard*."

At daybreak next morning the wind fell light, and a long, sweeping swell rolled down from the northward, warning us that somewhere near the equator a storm of unusual violence had prevailed. The look-out man reported a sail on the horizon. This was an object of much curiosity, and for a moment it was quite a relief to realise that there were other people in the world beside ourselves.

As I followed the movements of the craft ahead I was struck by her strange, erratic movements. At times she appeared to be heading in our direction, at others in quite the opposite, steering wide. At breakfast, Captain Lombard suggested that as the craft appeared to be in trouble the pinnacle had better set off to investigate. I willingly gave up my watch below, for a visit to another ship was a decided break in the monotony. A wish passed through my mind that no whales would be sighted during my absence, but what I saw as we drew closer to the stranger drove all thought of whale-hunting away, for in the schooner ahead were fellow-seafarers in trouble.

The ship appeared to be a large fore-and-aft wooden

schooner of close on one thousand tons, with four tall masts which seemed to stand straight out of the half-submerged hull like branchless trees in a neglected forest. The great sails lay on deck, the main and mizzen being completely under water. As she rolled, booms and gaffs crashed from side to side, threatening each moment to bring down the masts. It was easy to see that she was sinking and at any moment might turn over. As we sped towards her I saw that a lady stood beside the jigger-shrouds waving something white to attract our attention. Close beside her with forepaws on the taff-rail was a huge St. Bernard dog, howling loudly. For a while I did not know where to board the schooner, for she was rolling terribly, but at last I selected a place on the starboard quarter, and with the next roll sprang from the pinnace and landed in the chains of the jigger-rigging.

"Hang on, sir!" yelled Stockley as the pinnace dived away, and when the schooner rolled to starboard I was completely submerged. I dared not release my grip until she rolled to the port side, then sprang, drenched, on to the deck, quite close to where the lady lay prostrate in a faint. The dog sat beside her, growling at my approach, but I lifted the lady gently and brushed aside a great mass of nut-brown hair which covered her features, revealing a handsome, refined face. She appeared to be some twenty-five years of age, but the poor creature was too exhausted to speak.

I glanced anxiously forward, seeking other signs of life. All the boats were missing, and I feared perhaps this poor lady was alone. Presently the dog walked to the companion-way and paused, looking at me with eyes full of intelligence. He slowly wagged his great tail,

so, leaving the lady on the deck, I shouted to Stevie to bring the pinnace under the port quarter. Then, kneeling beside the lady, I tried to revive her by bathing her face with water from the scuppers. Presently she stirred and opened her eyes, gazing into my face in wonderment. The full consciousness returned and, bursting into tears, she pointed down to the companion stairs. The dog came to her side and placed his head on her shoulder sympathetically, and she threw her arms round his neck, burying her face in his woolly coat and crying as though her heart would break. As I squeezed the water from my clothes she said to the dog through her tears:

"Carlo, I told you someone would surely come to our assistance." The faithful creature wagged his tail and growled as he looked up into my face.

"Is there anyone below?" I questioned awkwardly. "Where are your men, madam?"

"They went away in the boats two days ago and I am alone with two dead men in the cabin," she returned tearfully.

I dived into the companion-way, where the water was swishing from side to side with every roll. In a large well-furnished saloon I saw a man stretched out on a couch, his face battered and his clothing torn as though he had been in a scrimmage. At first I thought he was dead, but on closer inspection I saw he was sleeping from sheer exhaustion, so I endeavoured to rouse him. He was hot and feverish and his arm and one of his legs hung limp and useless as though broken.

I dashed up the ladder and shouted to Stevie to come on board and bring the canvas cover from his

engine-room. Then I turned to the lady, who was sitting with her arms round the dog's neck, gazing vacantly at the *Anna Lombard*.

"If you have any valuables and clothing you wish to save, you must be quick, madam!" I exclaimed anxiously. "If you tell me where to find them I will take you to our ship. We have medical men on board who will attend the injuries of the wounded person below."

"Is he alive?" she exclaimed, rising to her feet with her hand upon her breast. "Is he alive? Oh, let me go to him. I thought he was dead."

Heedless of the rolling of the ship she hastened excitedly down the stairs. I followed, anxious to tell her that at any moment the ship might turn over and sink. She fell on her knees beside the man and called him by name, begging him to speak to her, but her efforts to rouse him were as fruitless as mine had been.

"Madam, you must hasten. There is no time to lose. Tell me where your cabin is. If you wish to save anything you must be quick."

She sprang to her feet and faced me, saying, "I have nothing to save. All the clothing I possess is what I am wearing." Then pointing across the saloon, she continued, "That is Mr. Lester's room."

Then as she pointed to a large cabin at the fore part of the saloon I thought she was about to collapse again as she said: "In that room you will find a dead man whom I killed."

It was evident that we had stumbled across a mystery, but this was not the time for investigation. I entered the room indicated and saw a man, who was evidently the captain, lying spread-eagle fashion over the table, quite dead, and holding in his clutch a piece

of cloth which had evidently been torn from the dress the lady wore. His features proclaimed him to be either English or American, and on his face was a look of intense hatred that death could not hide. I seized a large tin box on which I saw the ship's name and which obviously contained the ship's papers and the official log-book. I then closed the door, for I knew that the ship could not remain afloat much longer, and if anything was to be done to save the living it was necessary to ignore the dead. Just then Stevie entered the cabin, so I gently pushed open the stateroom door, saying:

"Here, Stevie, just look at this. You may be called upon to confirm my story of how the body lay."

"Bliné!" said he, "what a bloody mess," and quickly closed the door.

We laid the unconscious man on the engine cover, and after a struggle carried him to the deck. How to get him into the pinnace sorely puzzled me.

"Stevie," I said, "get away back to the ship and bring more assistance. We'll have to swing him into the pinnace by the end of the after gaff."

With the next weather roll Steve swung himself into the pinnace, and away she went. The lady refused to leave the prostrate man. She sat on the deck with his head in her lap soothing his burning temples with water. The dog sat beside her, gazing into her face as if half expecting caresses.

Gazing round curiously, I saw that the schooner was a fine specimen, and from the printing on her wheel-box I gathered that she had not always been the *Santa Barbara* of Lima. On the compass-bowl were the words Portland, Maine, 1881. So she had not seen

ten years of sailing, and this fatal day was doomed for Davy Jones' locker.

The gaff of the jigger hung by the throat and peak halyards; the sail had evidently been blown away, for portions of the bolt-rope remained to tell its own tragic story. With every roll, over went the cabin skylight with a crash, breaking the sliding hatch in its movement. I raised the throat halyards, then the peak, and took a turn with the vang—or down hauls; and when the pinnace returned I was pleased to see Joe Splendid.

The sliding hatch, or what was left of it, made a stretcher for the wounded man. Then when two seamen had scrambled to my side we placed him gently upon it and lashed him securely; then, by reaving a good stout line through a block on the gaff end, were able to lower him safely into the cockpit of the pinnace, which surged ahead. We lashed her under the star-board jigger-chains, for the list to port was increasing each moment, and before the next roll the lady sat beside the unconscious man in the pinnace. Carlo followed, and I threw myself into the sea. It was the easiest way, and as I sat on the cabin top the lady thanked me with her eyes. The double drenching was certainly worth such a look as she gave me.

I wondered if the unconscious man was her husband, for I noticed that she wore a wedding ring. When we arrived alongside the *Anna Lombard* the castaways were handed over to the medical staff, while great wonderment and gossip prevailed among the crew as to why the crew of the schooner had taken to the boats, leaving the lady to almost certain death. I held my peace concerning what the lady had told me, and as I handed Captain Lombard the despatch-box and log-book I gave

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him a full account of what I had seen, calling upon Steve to describe how we had found the captain's body. I then sought my berth for a change of clothes, and as it was my watch below, spent the time entering up the details of the morning's work in my private log-book.

The schooner turned over during the afternoon and lay for a while on her beam ends, then she settled down in earnest to her last rest on the bed of the ocean.



## CHAPTER XXI

### A DEEP-SEA TRAGEDY

WHEN I left my cabin at four o'clock that evening I found that Carlo had made friends with Kong, of whom I made inquiries about the wounded man, but the only information I could gather was that he still lay in a state of coma. The doctors had made an examination and found that he had received a nasty flesh wound in the hip, that his left arm was broken and two ribs were fractured.

The lady was sleeping peacefully in one of the after-staterooms, but as yet had not made any statement or given any particulars of the wreck of the *Santa Barbara*.

The trade winds returned in spasmodic gusts with intervals of calm, then settled down to a steady breeze. No whales appeared, but black-fish were fairly plentiful. The oil yielded by this species is of very poor quality, so they are not molested by whale-hunters, except in those climates where the flesh is considered a delicacy. I often thought how strange it was that this particular fish should be called the Black Fish, when the sea holds many specimens of denser tint. The scientific name of this cetacean is *Delphinus rhinoceros*. It rightly belongs to the dolphin family. It has a strange-looking head, and its mouth protrudes from a very high forehead, with only ten teeth. The dorsal fin

is curved towards the tail. In seafaring phraseology "it leans aft," which causes it to appear so strange and round. When diving and playing in schools they are often mistaken for porpoise.

A large herd of round-backed, long-snouted dolphin raced side by side with the ship, swimming leisurely and keeping time with our movements with rhythmic precision. It seemed as though they knew by instinct when we were going to rise to the crest of the long swell, and they also would rise, regulating their speed to suit our pace. The colours reflected by these creatures were exquisite. Not one was over seven feet in length, and all were exactly alike. The dense blackness of the dorsal sides stood out in strong contrast to the silver-striped ventral sides; the pectoral fins seemed lost in the shadows. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight. As far as the eye could see, the water was perfectly black with their vast number. They would glide with us over the tops of the waves, then commence to roll over and over. For miles on each side of the ship one could see them sporting and gambolling, flying out of the water as if eager to show their acrobatic powers. I am sure the beauty of this fish is somewhat marred by the ugly long name that has been given it by some scientific "busy-body." Fancy calling a fish *Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*. As a sea-captain once said: "Twenty-four lovely letters that might have been much better employed elsewhere!"

I stood for a while interested and entertained by the display of gymnastics, till with one desperate rush, like the bursting of a sudden storm, they tossed their tails high into the air and plunged into the depths. Joe Splendid, standing beside me, said: "Grampus or kill-

ers, which?" We had not long to wait. Close beside us appeared several large grampus (*Phocaena capensis*). They were dismal-looking brutes, with grey, almost smoke-coloured top sides, the dorsal fins long and sharp-pointed. The pectoral fins seemed almost to operate from the shoulder. These long fins are bent nearly round, something like a boomerang. The stumpy head and large eyes give its face an almost human appearance. About the body, especially the undersides, were long patches of bright and dull yellow. Indeed, as they rose and fell in the ever-changing light, a tint of yellow seemed to impregnate the grey of the top sides.

Having scrutinised us closely, they raced away in pursuit of the school of dolphins.

Next morning a bos'n bird (*Phaëton rubricauda*) came out of the vast blueness, a lonely solitary visitor, as it sailed over the ship, turning its head from side to side, then off again to the north and east, vanishing almost as quickly as it had appeared. If the breeze held good we would sight Easter Island at noon the following morning.

That evening during the dog watch Mr. Haskell informed me that the lady had told her story, which was a very sad one. Although so many years have passed, I still retain in my mind every detail of that tragedy, which, when it became known, created a tremendous sensation in certain Pacific ports during the time of which I write. For obvious reasons I will not repeat names, but will endeavour to tell the story of a woman's fight for life and honour as it was told to me.

The lady—whom I will call Mrs. Munro—was the wife of a noted lawyer, and had lived all her life in an eastern city. She had, unfortunately, quarrelled with

her husband and fled to the western states, finding a home with her brother, a civil engineer. When this brother was appointed engineer in charge of some harbour development works in a Peruvian coast town, she went with him to manage his household. Several weeks previous to the tragedy she had joined a yachting party for a run down the coast as far as Pisco Bay.

There was a large number of yachts and schooners taking advantage of the fair wind, and in the early hours of the morning, when the open sea was reached, the wind deserted them, and during the calm a fog enveloped them. The vibration of a slowly advancing steamer was heard right ahead. Ever and anon its horn would sound a warning note until it grew closer and closer. They had no means of warning those on the steamer of their presence. Presently the crash came and the little craft was smashed into fragments, everyone on board being thrown into the water.

Mrs. Munro clutched a floating cabin-hatch and a lifebuoy, but drifted away in the fog, giving herself up for lost. Then she saw her brother's dog Carlo, and he remained with her until they were rescued. How long she was in the water she did not remember. She managed to scramble on to the hatch and held herself in a comfortable position, making room for the dog beside her. Then she must have fainted, for she did not remember being rescued. She awoke to consciousness to find herself lying upon the deck of a strange ship with a number of dirty-looking uncouth men standing round her, and Carlo tied up some distance away, barking savagely at one of the men who was thrashing him unmercifully with a rope. Her feelings

may be imagined when she realised that she was on board a schooner reaching out into the Pacific, and as she subsequently discovered, was on a voyage to Australia.

The captain refused to return. She described him as a tall, black-whiskered, low-down Yankee of an evil mind, who would not listen to her. She promised to pay him well if he would return to some port where she could communicate with her friends, but he was obdurate. However, there was one amongst the crew who championed her cause, and when the captain would have shot the dog, he sprang forward, knocking the captain's revolver overboard. A terrible fight followed, and the captain soon lay helpless on the deck. Scarcely a word was spoken; the other men, who were nearly all negroes or Mexicans, seemed afraid of her champion, Mr. Lester, the mate, who then carried her to his room, telling her to change into a suit of his best clothes. He thrust a loaded revolver into her hand and told her to use it without fear on the first man who tried to interfere with her. Then, handing her the key of the door, he left her. No words could describe the feelings of that delicate lady into whose life so great and undreamed-of a change had been suddenly wrought. Peter Haskell told me she was a woman of extraordinary nerve and temperament, or she would have gone raving mad.

She could hear a fierce controversy going on between the mate and the skipper, who was half mad with rage at having been knocked out by the mate. Mr. Lester demanded that the ship return to Callio, but the skipper refused, and in the end Lester was seized by the deckhands and placed in irons.

Mrs. Munro explained to Peter Haskell that she could not understand why she was so well treated after that. The very best of food that the ship's stores could produce was conveyed to her cabin by a Chinese boy, and although she heard the captain on many occasions, she saw little of him. One day the Chinese boy was sick, and a negro, with whom she could converse in English, brought her food. He told her that Lester was a prisoner in the deck-house. She informed the nigger that she was a rich woman, and if it were possible to release the mate she would pay well for such a service. Then, having sown the seeds of mutiny, she decided to take her place at the cabin table and face the brutal captain, matching her wits against his. She realised that the captain was a loathsome, despicable coward, and that he had some scheme in the back of his mind, although he appeared to ignore her presence entirely, and as the days went by neither she nor the dog were molested. She could not understand the reason of it.

She discarded Lester's clothing, having obtained needles and cotton to repair her own. As well as she was able she paid strict attention to her appearance, and as she sat on the cabin skylight with Carlo beside her, she often saw the captain gazing at her with the leer of lust in his horrible eyes. She had proved herself a woman of spirit by fearlessly facing the captain at the table, but he little realised that her courage was half inspired by the possession of Lester's revolver and the hope of finding her champion. One day Lester contrived to communicate with her, telling her not to break the silence, to keep to her own room at the least sign of danger. "On no account must the captain know

you are armed, but keep the revolver with you always, and do not be afraid to use it," so ran his note.

Mrs. Munro could not adequately describe her feelings during the ensuing weeks of idleness. The loathsome surroundings, the uncouth men, the coarse food and the want of clothing were a few of the horrors she was forced to endure in silence, wondering what the end would be.

Peter Haskell let her wander on and tell her story in her own way, sobbing her heart out in his arms, as though he was indeed her father.

Her lonely life continued for what seemed an eternity. Seated in a deck-chair with the dog beside her, she whispered all kinds of nonsense to him, under the watchful eye of the captain. They were hateful days and yet so full of beauty, for she described to Mr. Haskell how the sea soothed her throbbing brain. My chief told me her soul was full of poetry and romance, and then she told him she realised that she loved Lester, and was certain he loved her, yet no words had ever been spoken between them.

To me, in those days, such a thing seemed impossible. I simply treated this part of her story as the imagination of her tortured brain, but no doubt that realisation prevented insanity. She told Peter that the moment she looked into Lester's eyes she knew that she loved him. The manner in which he had fought and suffered on her behalf made her proud to love him. Married woman though she was, she was not ashamed to admit it. She must confide in someone, and thus opened her heart, recognising with her feminine instinct his innate goodness of character.

The day before the *Anna Lombard* hove in sight,

something happened at the other end of the ship, and she understod that the second mate, a loathsome cut-throat Mexican, had fallen overboard. At the same moment Carlo bounded forward to greet Lester, whom the men had released. There was every indication of a storm, and it was evident the captain had been drinking, for he sat in his deck-chair beside the helmsman, apparently asleep.

The ship was straining under a heavy cloud of canvas, and just as the storm burst, a heavy sea came over the forecastle, and down crashed some sails. Mrs. Munro struggled to the companion-way, where she met Lester, who told her not to fear, as it was but a tropical squall, and that after he had fixed the ship on a course for the American continent he would put the skipper in irons and take her to her friends.

What happened she did not know, for the ship was rolling dreadfully. Then some one came into the cabin and told her they were sinking. The last she saw of the negro cabin-boy he was struggling with a bag up the companion-way, saying the crew were taking to the boats and were leaving the ship. She grew alarmed and staggered across the saloon to reach her cabin, only to be confronted by the half-mad captain. She paused for a moment and then thought of the revolver. That day of all days she had forgotten it, neglecting to place it in its usual hiding-place, and she was now completely at the mercy of a beast. Her brain became confused and her legs gave way beneath her as she sank on the cabin floor. She knew it was useless to appeal for mercy, for this was the chance the captain had been waiting for. The monster seized her in his arms and carried her to his berth. She had the presence of mind



to scream and tried to free her arms, but her struggles were in vain. He threw her on to his bed, then turned to close the door, to find Lester there, and as the wind roared overhead and the sea dashed over the ship, those two men fought like savages. Mrs. Munro must have fainted, for when her brain commenced to act again, all was silent but for the heaving of the ship. She glanced frantically round, and close beside her, fixed to the bunk-side, hanging in a silver sheath, was a long silver-hilted dagger. The captain returned, adjusting his torn clothing, his face streaming with blood, and for a moment paused to look at Lester, who had fallen on to the couch, apparently dead. She sat up and seized the dagger, determined to fight, and as the captain came towards her she fixed her eyes on him. He made as though to take her in his arms, with the light of victory in his eyes, but she drove the dagger into his neck with every ounce of her strength, and while he staggered round the cabin she slowly edged away, and in spite of the rolling of the ship raced up the companion-way calling frantically to Carlo. The dog was struggling in a big sea on the main deck. He had evidently followed Lester and had not heard his mistress scream, or the tragedy might have had a different ending.

By this time the storm had passed. The crew had taken to the boats, and what became of them no one will ever know. Mrs. Munro was, as she supposed, alone on a sinking ship with two dead men in the saloon. Is it any wonder she gave way to despair?

After a time she mustered sufficient courage to return to the saloon, and was overjoyed to find that Lester was not dead. She cautiously peeped into the cap-

tain's stateroom and saw that he had fallen over the table and was quite dead, so she closed the door to hide the horror of it all.

She then fetched some water from the cuddy and brandy from the sideboard. Presently, Lester opened his eyes and smiled, and she was relieved to know that he lived, although he was fearfully battered and bleeding. She knew that a long and desperate struggle must have taken place while she lay unconscious on the captain's bed.

I will pass over the night of agony spent in the saloon. Lester's suffering must have been terrible, for towards morning he grew feverish and light-headed, then lapsed into a state of coma bordering upon death. She supposed that he was dead, and unconsciously wandered on deck, though she never remembered doing so. As the morning dawned the sea became calm, but the ship continued to roll and strain in the heavy swell, while the sea broke on board on all sides. She could not think; her brain refused to act, and she seemed to lose the power of her limbs. Her eyes were burning and her brain seemed on fire, and when at last she saw our boat dancing over the water, she thought her own death-knell had been sounded, for she swooned.

As Peter Haskell repeated the poor lady's story, his eyes filled with tears. I must admit that I, too, was visibly affected, and for a while we walked the deck in silence.

"What are the prospects of Mr. Lester's recovery?" I questioned.

"He will recover, no doubt, in time," he returned, "but he is sorely wounded."

"Has he regained consciousness?" I asked.

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

"No, but he is in good hands, having the unique distinction of the services of three very famous doctors."

I then told him what Mrs. Munro told me in the saloon of the *Santa Barbara*, and we both felt she was quite justified in defending herself as she did.

The memory of that tragedy lingers in my mind; the details haunt me. As I write I seem to see again the whole scene: the wrecked saloon, the prostrate mate, the dead skipper, and the beautiful woman for whom they fought. I can even hear again the swishing, rising water under the cabin floor, and the creaking and straining of the sinking ship fills my memory with recollections of my own fears of being overwhelmed in the sinking *Santa Barbara*.

## CHAPTER XXII

### EASTER ISLAND

SINCE the appearance of the bos'n bird the previous morning, when that well-known harbinger of land looked down upon us from his airy regions in inquisitive curiosity, Ark Royd had been very restless. All day long and half the night he remained on deck anxiously gazing ahead or searching the horizon to the north and east with a pair of marine glasses. That he should show such interest in that tiny island I suppose was only natural, for many years before he had been shipwrecked some six hundred miles to the south-east of the island and had sailed in an open boat the whole distance, by guesswork, accomplishing the journey in less than five days with the wind behind him. He had often mentioned the incident to me, and Joe Splendid said that Ark—old Ark, as he was called by his shipmates—was considered to be a crank on the subject of Easter Island. During the middle watch I cornered him, as it were, and he joined me in my walk on the quarterdeck. His story was very interesting, throwing considerable light upon that little-known mountain summit, the highest point of a vast continent now submerged. After describing the wreck of his ship and the long boat journey and the subsequent landing on the island, he told me many startling facts about the wonderful statues and unfinished monuments and carv-

ings which abound there. During the two years he spent among the natives he discovered many hitherto-unknown facts about these interesting people. Said he:

"There is not the slightest doubt but what the island was once a stone quarry or workshop of a race that inhabited a vast continent which became submerged during some gigantic upheaval many centuries before our historic period, or the history of the world, as modern science knows it. The statues are beautifully finished by workmen whose skill must have been marvellous. They represent a race of people, gigantic in stature, whose custom it was to penetrate the lobe of the ear, extending it in such a way that in some cases it rested upon the shoulder. The present natives retain that custom among the elders and chiefs. It is their idea of beauty, in much the same way that the chiefs of my mother's people are wont to tattoo their faces."

While describing his experience on the island, I endeavoured to lead him on to further discussion concerning the statues and carvings that abound on every hillside. The story interested me much, because as a boy—a first-voyager—I too had landed on the island. But what he loved to talk about most were the ideas or theories he had formed concerning the early history of his mother's people, the Maori race. He was certainly an advanced thinker, and something of a scholar, for he seemed to be exceedingly well versed in the folklore and traditions of the whole Polynesian race, and my log-book contains many stories told by him during the dog watches; stories of great battles during tribal wars, of wonderful migrations, all of which I substantiated in after years by learning to love the Maori people and the country of their habitation. He told me that his

mother's race belonged to a sub-race, who formerly dwelt on part of that vast continent which in remote days formed a connection with America and Australia, Easter Island being but the lonely mountain peak rising amidst a boundless desert of sandy waste, which is now a world-wide reminder that the historical period fixed as the world's beginning is hopelessly out of date and very modern when compared with the antiquity of Easter Island.

At daybreak Ark Royd relieved the man in the crow's-nest, saying that he would remain aloft until the island was sighted. Considering his advanced years his activity aloft was marvellous and caused many a younger man to look to his laurels.

The tragedy of the *Santa Barbara* had cast a strange spell over all hands. Mr. Jones was particularly affected, and as I joined him in the sailroom—or the “grouser's stitchery,” as some wag had dubbed the sailmaking workshop—he said, with an I-told-you-so look:

“Do you know, Mr. Hedger, I knew that something unusual was going to happen when I saw the Flying Dutchman.”

“I tell you, Mr. Jones, you were, on both occasions on which you saw the Phantom Ship, suffering from some hallucination,” I returned, much annoyed at the renewal of the subject.

He laughed outright at my declaration, then said seriously: “I don't think we shall have much more luck now that we have a woman on board!”

“Good Lord!” I exclaimed, “is there any limit to your superstitious nonsense? Did we not carry lady passengers to the Argentine?”

"Yes," he answered, "we did, but that was different—quite different."

Our conversation was interrupted by the Pirate, who scrambled down the ladder and took his seat on the third bench, commencing work on the spreadout sail. I was certainly very pleased to see him, for I thought his presence would put a stop to the sailmaker's depressing talk. But evidently the Pirate had heard portions of our conversation, for he said:

"Mr. Hedger, Sails 'as gotta—what-yer-call-'em—a bee in 'is bonnet. We all dink 'im dam mad."

"He is no doubt suffering from some strange complaint, and I strongly recommend him to see the doctor. Perhaps the Professor can suggest a remedy," I said with a laugh, not so much at the sailmaker's superstitious ideas as at the realisation that my companions were men of two very different types, and in spite of their respective eccentricities I appreciated the almost daily periods spent in their company. But both the Pirate and I were growing very weary of Mr. Jones' pessimistic views, seeing nothing but evil intentions and purposes in every unusual happening, and I was glad that Steve Finlay had not told him how the dead captain of the *Santa Barbara* had been found by us.

"Land on the starboard bow!!!" yelled Ark from the crow's-nest, and Casey leaned over the combings of the main hatchway, saying with a merry twinkle in his eye:

"Sure now, Mr. Hedger, the boss harpooner can now rest in peace" (only he said "pace"). "'Aving once more set eyes on 'is very own Easter Island, making sure now 'tis still afloat, 'e'll sleep for a week. What a pity now 'tis not Easter morn!"

"Talking of shipwrecks and castaways," said Mr. Jones, ignoring the Irishman's joke, "I was once in a little barque called the *Hilda Thomas* out o' Sunderland, taking a cargo of steel rails to Calcutta . . ."

"Now, Jonesie," interrupted the Pirate sharply, "no more what-you-call-'em fairy-tales about what-you-call-'em ghosts and other what-you-call-'em creepy t'ings."

"I am not going to tell you an occult story," returned Jones, somewhat hurt by the sudden interruption. "I am simply going to tell you a story which is true. But there——" and he tossed away the part of the sail on which he was working, then rose and reached for his fid with manifest disappointment.

"You go ahead," said the Pirate, with a turn of his head which caused his earrings to swing, flashing in the sunlight. "Only, don't you forget, we don't want no more what-you-call-'em spirit cuffers, do we, Mr. Hedger?"

"Let him tell his yarn, Merto," said I. "The time goes much more quickly and pleasantly while Mr. Jones is yarning."

Jones turned in his seat and gazed at me as though in doubt as to my earnestness. Then continued:

"As I was saying, when I was in the old *Hilda Thomas* I had a strange experience in the Indian Ocean. One afternoon we overtook a boatload of castaways who had been knocking about the ocean for fifteen days in an open boat—seven women and five men, and when we found them they were in a terrible plight; but the peculiar thing about the whole affair was that the men were prostrate, positively down and out, without an ounce of energy left, while the women worked the boats



and tended the sick. There was plenty of food of a kind, and they had filled their water-beaker several times with rain water, so it was not privation that reduced the men to such an extremity. When we hoisted them on board the women, of course, were very boat-sore and suffered from cramp, otherwise they did not seem to be affected. But the men, sir, they were all so much exhausted we thought them dead to a man. They took weeks to recover. Some did not recover and we sent them to the general hospital in Calcutta, while the women in a few days regained their former health as though nothing had happened. How is this?"

"I really do not know," I returned thoughtfully. "My experience and knowledge of the opposite sex is so very limited."

"I'll tell you," said the Pirate, and his theory certainly seemed a likely one. Strange to say, the peculiar twist in his articulation, his strange utterance "what-you-call-'em," so characteristic but so un-English, left him, and his speech ascended into decent English:

"First, you must consider that a man, a sailor in particular, is at all times most active, and when it comes to a long period of inactivity in such small space as an open boat, well, that, together with the terrible responsibility suddenly thrust upon him, and the great uncertainty of the issue, 'tis only natural that the nervous system is likely to break down. What-you-call-'em, nervous prostration sometimes breaks a man's life."

As I said, the Pirate was a remarkable person. His reading had given him a clear understanding of many things, and often his philosophy was quite surprising. After a moment or two of silence he told us an incident

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that came under his own notice during the early part of his seafaring career.

It appears that he was at that time cook on a Spanish brig trading to the West Indies. They were dismasted in the Caribbean Sea, and put into a sheltered harbour on what they supposed to be an uninhabited island. There they found a shipwrecked crew who had been living on the island for a month—about forty people, fifteen of whom were women. They were mostly Italians going to settle in Cuba, but their ship had been lost in a storm, and in lifeboats they had drifted to the island. When the Spanish ship arrived all the men were down with some strange malady, but the women were not affected. These good souls did all the work of the camp, besides tending the sick and often burying the dead. There must have been some tender memories connected with this incident, for the Pirate's eyes filled with tears as he told it, and I knew that it was no forecastle "cuffer." The story was full of pathos, worthy of a far better pen than mine to record in full the deeds of those women, the shipwrecked heroines of the *Comte de Montalembert*.

The shrill whistle of the bos'n's pipe interrupted an interesting morning. Eight bells struck and I went on deck. There was Easter Island about three miles distant on the starboard bow. The southern portion of this strange mountain peak looked gaunt and desolate, showing no green trees or brushwood, only tiny hills which seem to divide the island into districts, as it were. Even to the lay mind these molehill formations appear to be man-made. Being of volcanic origin they are easily accounted for. On the coastline the sheets of lava might be distinctly seen with the aid of good

glasses. They extend along the shore in broken lines to heights varying from forty to about ninety feet, and extending seaward in broken ridges. Against the alternating cliffs and jagged rocks the Pacific rollers dash intermittently, sending up huge clouds of white sparkling spray which hides and then lays bare the inhospitable shore.

The island had always been a source of wonderment to me since my first voyage, and now I was feasting my eyes upon it once more. I remembered all I had seen and subsequently read about it, and felt as if some irresistible force was impelling me to cast myself into the sea and attempt to swim on shore. No doubt the reader will think that the occult discussions in the sail-room were causing my mind to take excursions into the realm of imagination. But that is not so. I have met others who have told me they have been influenced in the same way. It was the memory of the wonderful statues and carvings which had fascinated me so in my younger days, and it was only natural that my soul should rise in rebellion at having to pass such a place.

Mr. Haskell, standing behind me, broke the silence, saying:

"That island, Mr. Hedger, contradicts the whole scheme of creation, according to the creed of modern theologians."

I turned and gazed into the cheery face, and said seriously:

"Have you ever landed there, sir?"

"No, I have not, but being something of a student of ethnology and the organic laws governing mankind, I am naturally very interested. I have read a number of works concerning the statues and carvings, and

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some years ago came across a scientific study of these things which I found particularly fascinating."

"They *are* interesting," I returned. "Having once seen and examined them closely, one might say with truth that the images remain engraved on one's mind as long as reason lasts."

He looked at me suspiciously, I thought. I suppose my statement must have sounded rather grandiloquent, so he questioned:

"Have you ever landed on Easter Island?"

"Yes, sir," I returned. "Let me tell you, sir, how it happened. It was during my first voyage in the old *L*—— bound to a Puget Sound port with a cargo of coal from the west of England. When some two hundred miles south of Easter Island our main water-tank sprang a leak and flooded the bilges. The pumps were rigged and hundreds of gallons of the precious liquid pumped overboard. When the tank was dry the hole was repaired with cement and sand. A mixture of this was made and put over the entire bottom of the tank, and we bore up for Easter Island. We dropped anchor in twenty fathoms and Captain N—— went ashore to investigate the prospects of filling a spare tank which would supply us till we reached the doldrums. The noise of our activities echoed and re-echoed in the little bay, especially the buoying of the cable—every ship that anchors in these waters must be prepared to slip the cable at a moment's notice, for at the least sign of a change of wind it is necessary to put to sea. With all the noise we saw and heard no natives.

"When the gig went ashore I was included in the crew as coxwain. We ran the boat up on to a sandy

beach, and the captain set off along a well-beaten track, accompanied by two men. When they disappeared behind the hill I scrambled on shore in defiance of the two men left behind to pull the boat into deep water to await the return of the captain. Up the hill I went, making the most of my liberty, picking bunches of a sage-like tree. I went on and on, heedless of time, then sat down to light my pipe, delighted with the unfamiliar sensation of once more being on terra firma; then on again, steadily climbing, determined to see what lay beyond. It was a hot climb, and as I turned to survey the view to seaward I could trace the coastline and the fringing breakers to the right and to the left, and thought what a beautiful sight the old ship made as she lay at anchor in the calm waters which reflected every outline and spar as in a mirror.

"Presently I pulled up abruptly, for I saw before me the gigantic forms of giants, which rose up out of the sunburnt grass, with the eyes, noses and mouths of a human being, but the ears extended to their shoulders. How many of these strange forms fixed their steady gaze upon me I could not tell. My brain simply would not act. Had I suddenly gone mad, and were these the creatures that tormented mad folk? I was petrified with fear. How long I stood staring at the images I do not know, but a cold perspiration broke out all over me and I trembled. In my ignorance I imagined them to be living creatures, rising out of the earth to devour me. While I stood there the details of those carvings were engraved upon my mind for all time. Then, with a determined resolve to look at them no more, I turned and ran down the hill as if Old Nick himself was at my heels. When I arrived on

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the beach the captain was waiting to severely reprimand me for wandering away without permission. When I told him of what I had seen, he humorously told me that the chief diet of those monsters was 'disobedient first-voyage apprentices.' "

Mr. Haskell showed great interest in my narrative as I paused to feast my eyes once more on the coastline and the tiny islands that project from Oromgo point, the most southern headland.

"There, sir," I said, pointing to the headland, "that is where we obtained the water, and that is where the quarry is situated in which there are a large number of statues. The island, besides being entirely devoid of trees or even bushes of any size, has no running streams; but the many rising hills, which are simply extinct volcanoes, supply fresh water from their crater-lakes."

The south-east trade winds freshened slightly, and we ran past Easter Island so rapidly that by two o'clock the highest point of land had vanished in the mists, and the island and its mysteries were matters of much discussion by all on board.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AMBERGRIS

**D**URING the next two days the wind freshened, sending our old craft through the water like a steamship. One morning watch from four till eight we logged twelve knots. The *Anna Lombard* did not make much fuss about it either, she seemed to slip through the water cleanly, not even a flicker of spray coming over the decks, which were often littered with flying-fish.

Kong reported favourably on the progress of our unfortunate passengers. They were slowly recovering, but as yet Mr. Lester had not made any statement that would throw light upon the captain's death. Kong said:

"I gave the lady some of my Chinese clothing, which she will alter to her own satisfaction; thus she will feel more at ease!"

The romance that we had so suddenly stumbled upon was a subject of great interest to all on board. Everyone seemed to have a different view of the correct procedure of the chief actors. Of course, as far as the fore-castle was concerned, the romance was complete, the only natural course for the castaways to follow upon recovery being to let Captain Lombard marry them, enter the event in the log-book and confirm it at the next port of call by reporting at the British Consulate. "Unless," as I heard some gossip suggest,

"the lady prefers to marry Mr. Hedger, their rescuer."

The sailor's tongue is often guided by his eyes, which are extremely wide open. What he does not quite understand he will dismiss from mind with a self-satisfied conjecture. He is often a tactician, for he will gather information by judiciously interrogating the members of the commissariat staff. But in the *Anna Lombard* this was impossible, for the cooks and stewards were all Chinese, splendid workmen in their own department, respected by all hands because of their wonderful devotion to their chief, Kong, and their strict attention to work. They did not mingle with the crew, therefore no information concerning the "after guard" trickled through to the fore-castle.

In my opinion of the romance I was guided to a certain extent by Mr. Haskell. I thought his was the most common-sense view. That grand old man of the sea pointed out to me that it was the conventional man-made marriage laws which were often so cruelly wrong, and my readers, remembering his story, will realise exactly why he thought so. But there was much in this old gentleman's philosophy which guided me in after years to penetrate the thin veneer of many of the artificialities of life.

The sailmaker in summing up the romance delivered a long lecture upon what he termed "the divine side of the holy state of matrimony and the fuller understanding of the divine law governing natural selection," all of which was beyond my comprehension. The Pirate and I listened more or less attentively, and I must say, as I turn over the pages of my diary, that Jones' definition of eternal love and the recognition of one's



soul mate were all very interesting. But the Pirate clearly defined what the forward hands thought of the affair when he said:

"Mr. Lester has proved himself a man—what-you-call-'em—a gentleman. He fought and killed the captain to protect the woman. Some day they marry. They make one more what-you-call-'em, romance of the sea."

"Sperm whale on the starboard bow!" yelled the look-out man, and once more the romance of the whale-hunt commenced in earnest.

It was a lone whale, evidently one of those which are sometimes turned out of the school by their fellows, much in the same way as a rogue elephant seems to be exiled. These whales are sometimes dangerous and will often turn on a boat when attacked, but we did not pause to consider this possibility. Off we went, dashing away over the moderate sea with a spanking breeze in our sails, while, under the guidance of the mate, the *Anna Lombard* was reduced to lower topsails.

As I sat in the bow of my boat crouching over to windward to catch a glimpse of our quarry, I thought it strange that I should remember Mrs. Lombard and her ungratified desire to witness a whale-hunt. It was a perfect day for boat-sailing, and all three of the boats could concentrate their attention upon the great sperm. If anyone desired to witness a hunt at close quarters, the conditions were ideal. I had increased the ballast by additional bags of sand, rebent the lug sails to a longer hoist. Indeed, I had done everything in my power to gain a little more speed, but, as Casey remarked, "You can't get speed out of a bluff-nosed barge like our No. 3." She was rightly dubbed the "Snail's Coach."

The fine wind tested the sailing powers of all the boats pretty severely, and I knew my boat would now stand a better chance than in a light breeze. I saw that the Captain's boat had a close-reefed mainsail, but I eased on my sheets and Casey handled her very skilfully, sending her dancing over the waves, and shouting excitedly:

"Sure now, old girl, put yer best leg fo'ward. Show the other smart packets that yer 'ave bin joking."

Much to our delight we simply walked by No. 2. Ark Royd leaned over the gunwale and smiled, offering the painter. The second mate smiled as he guided his boat with the steering-oar, accepting my challenge to a race.

"Look out, Casey," I said, "slack away that sheet a little more, belay!"

I could see the whale ahead, about a mile or so, evidently enjoying his solitude, for ever and anon he would dive with a circular movement throwing up his wonderful tail and sending up showers of spray.

No. 2 boat dropped astern and Casey urged our boat forward with true Irish blarney: "Go to it, me dear," he cried as he waved his hand to old Ark in the boat astern. "For the first toime in yer loife, get in first," and as we commenced to pace No. 1—the crack boat of the team—his excitement was manifest, for he waved to the Pirate, the skipper's harpooner, saying: "Go it, old girl, me dear, me love, me darlint. Go it! Niver more will yer be called the Snails' Coach. Ye shall be called the Flying Angel, and may the divil fly away wid the boat that bates yer."

We all laughed at Casey. His excitement was certainly contagious. There was no need to tell my men

to stand by, all were fully alive to what was required. I fingered the harpoon cautiously, and for the hundredth time saw that the line was clear for running. A glance told me that this time I would be first, and as I poised the harpoon, my heart beat a whaleman's tattoo against my ribs.

"Starboard a bit. Ease away the sheets." Then I let fly the harpoon. I had judged my distance fairly well, allowing the boat to glide up nearly alongside, and as the harpoon plunged into the mass of blubber, down came the sails, and the masts were unshipped.

We lay tossing gently on the swell, waiting for his majesty of the deep to return to the surface, for he had sounded. The skipper's boat came up and hauled her wind as Captain Lombard shouted: "Well done, No. 3, that was a splendid exhibition . . ." The rest of his speech was lost in the noise of flapping sails, but I blushed like a schoolboy. It was something to be proud of in those days, for I had beaten my superiors upon equal terms.

The line was slowly running out, the whale had reached its limit and was returning to the surface. I heard Casey remark:

"Exhibition! indeed. Called us an exhibition, did 'e? Well I'm damned! Wonder what next 'e'll call us!"

"Back all," I cried, for the whale was rapidly coming to the surface directly beneath our boat, and fortunately the water was very clear, revealing the movements of the creature, thus enabling us to back out of the danger zone; otherwise, we may perchance have given the skipper an exhibition of aerial flight at the cost of a well-equipped boat, if not the loss of several

lives. When the whale reached the surface I saw what a monster he was. He did not turn tail and clear off, but turned and faced us, remaining stationary for a while gazing at us, no doubt thinking what a delicate morsel we would make. Evidently he did not see the second boat creeping up, and soon Ark Royd plunged a harpoon into his starboard side, terminating his career for all time.

There was something very wonderful about Ark Royd's harpooning. Years of practice had given him the famous "death plunge" aim, of which he was very proud. It was a Polynesian instinct inherited from his mother. There was another characteristic which I had heard of from his boatmen, but which until then I had never seen. It was the habit of his Maori ancestors when going into battle to make ugly grimaces, distorting their features to a terrible degree, believing this scared the enemy. As Ark stood in the bow of his boat, his eyes blazed with the light of battle. His face assumed a malicious grin, his mouth wide open showing a set of perfect teeth, and his red tongue protruded to its utmost limit. This was a fighting trick studied by his forebears.

Casey said, as with a sweep of the steering-oar he sent the boat out of the danger zone: "Sure now, Mr. Richester is indeed a lucky man. Old Ark does not need a harpoon, the face 'e pulls would kill any whale, sure now, 'twould."

The skipper's boat went about and returned to the ship. The pinnacle came speeding towards us as we passed a line round the flukes of our catch ready for towing. It was growing late, and at any time the wind might desert us, and it seemed a pity to waste precious

time over one sperm when we were anxious to cross the equator with as little delay as possible. It was part of our programme to hunt the waters round the Atolls and the outlying islands of the Marquesas group, which were some considerable distance to the north-west of our position.

Our sperm, or cachalot (*Physeter macrocephalus*), proved to be a massive creature some eighty-five feet in length. Had we retained the improvised try works, many barrels of oil might have been added to our cargo. Two very important features connected with this great whale I must briefly describe. One was the enormous size of the cuttlefish arms that were ejected just before death, and the other a valuable find of ambergris.

I have already dwelt at some length on the gigantic squid, but I must mention that the portions of that mighty mollusc in this case surpassed everything previously seen by me. I endeavoured to secure one of these great tentacles as it drifted close to our boat, an enormous arm with suckers complete, but before I could reach it a tiger-shark dragged it below. I was disappointed, for I thought of my Valparaiso hostess and how interested she would be with a full description of it.

The ambergris was first sighted by Ark Royd, who signalled to me that something was floating under the stern of our boat. I leaned over and saw a grey substance, which I at once recognised. It has often been said that ambergris is of as much value as the oil contained in the blubber of a full-sized carcase. As I drew it out of the water and placed it in the boat's bucket, I judged its weight to be about fifteen pounds.

Its value I did not care to estimate. There was a clause in the articles of agreement stating that all finds of ambergris were to be equally divided between the working members of the expedition. This was a liberal concession, and the discovery enhanced the value of our day's work considerably.

Next day we entered the tropics with a steady south-east wind, which continued for a few days. It was during one of these very hot evenings that Mrs. Munro appeared at the saloon table, it being the first occasion on which I had seen her since the day of the rescue. Her recent experience had left its mark upon her, but nothing could mar her exquisite beauty, and as her eyes met mine she seemed to say, "You alone know my secret, please keep it." She greeted me as she would an old friend, thanking me for the kind messages sent by Kong, to whom she referred as being a prince among men, a treasure of thoughtfulness and kindness. How little she realised that he was indeed a prince of men, though only a few on the ship knew it. She greeted the after guard with that delicate freedom so characteristic of the cultured, and, as she took her place beside the Captain, Carlo at her feet, tears started to her eyes. Doubtless she was thinking of the contrast between the *Santa Barbara* and the *Anna Lombard*.

Mr. Lester was slowly recovering from his injuries, though as yet he was quite unable to leave his cabin; nevertheless, he spoke his greetings through the open doorway, apparently on the highroad towards his former good death. Dr. Brennan told us that he considered the leaders of the expedition were very fortunate in falling in with the *Santa Barbara*, for the rapid recovery of both Mrs. Munro and Mr. Lester

proved beyond doubt the value of the medicated spermaceti, and he was very demonstrative in his congratulations to the Professor, whose invention had proved so beneficial. The Professor replied by briefly outlining the wonderful properties of the medicated oil, and its action upon the human body, saying that he was proud to think that his theory was a correct one, that medicated spermaceti contained properties which, under certain conditions, would rejuvenate the nervous system of the human being. That being so, he foresaw that the whaling industry would receive such a stimulus within the next year or so, that it would exceed in importance the cod-fishing industry of the North Sea and Dogger Bank. He briefly outlined the history and the wonderful growth of the cod fisheries and the importance to suffering humanity of the discovery of that remarkable product cod-liver oil. He ventured the opinion that the time was not far distant when the medical world would recommend for nervous prostration and other ailments medicated spermaceti.

It is nearly forty years since that famous voyage of the *Anna Lombard*, and I must admit that, as far as my knowledge goes, the Professor's words have not been fulfilled, but as one who has tasted its virtues and witnessed its health-giving properties I often wonder if the medicated spermaceti has ever found favour in the medical world. Or has it been pushed into oblivion by some antiquated superstition and the conservative, egotistical ignorance of folly and prejudice?

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE FOO FOO BAND

OUR journey northward was very slow, for calms and variables prevailed, making the work of trimming sail one long round of repeated pulling and hauling, which seamen thoroughly dislike.

One evening, after a day of blazing sunshine, Mrs. Munro walked the deck with me, pouring into my ears the story of her domestic strife which finally led her to leave her husband and seek the protection of her brother's home in the west. It was the usual tragedy of a misfit marriage forced upon her by her parents, a loveless affiliation fostered by social climbers.

Her husband was one of the wealthiest men of his state. He surrounded her with every luxury that money could purchase, but all the five years of their married life had not shown one spark of affection, neither had she experienced such feelings for him. Each year he grew more brutal in his treatment, and her life became unbearable. The climax was reached when he introduced his mistress to her in public. She fled, leaving instructions with her lawyer to institute proceedings for divorce.

I do not know why she selected me as her confidant. Perhaps she thought to justify her love for Lester. No doubt she supposed that in her terror and agony of fright on the deck of the schooner she must have told



me too much. Be that as it may, she had my whole-hearted sympathy. I recognised that she loved Lester and no power on earth could keep them apart in the future. The mate joined us, and for a while conversation ran upon conventional lines, gradually working round to her rapid recovery. She was very enthusiastic about the wonderful liquid administered to her and described in glowing terms its soothing effect upon her nerves. She awoke from her first sleep with a feeling of perfect tranquillity and from that moment commenced to recover. When she left us with a pleasant "good-night," Mr. Haskell gazed after her for a moment, then turned to me and said:

"Mr. Hedger, she is a very wonderful woman and although Lester is a poor man, with no prospects for the future, apart from those which his mate's ticket will find him, he is extremely fortunate. With a wife like Mrs. Munro a man could accomplish anything."

"Strange, is it not?" said the Professor, stepping in beside us, "how circumstances alter cases. That woman may have remained in the state of Maine the ill-treated wife of a Corporation lawyer, surrounded by every luxury, with never an adventure entering her life. Presto!" and he spread out his hands like a professional conjurer, "the scene changes, and in the west she experiences shipwreck, murder and rescue, and finds that lover for whom her soul has hungered, crowding into a few short weeks the romance of a lifetime. 'Pon my word, Mr. Haskell, it is scarcely creditable."

During Peter's long life he must have met many such cases, for he returned with a smile full of understanding: "The vicissitudes of fate and fortune sometimes surpass our comprehension."

For the first time since leaving the Argentine the saloon piano was uncovered, and Mrs. Munro treated us to some rare music. She was a perfect musician, but it was the sweet music rendered by our orchestra, the silver-mounted melodeon, the concertinas, and violin, which charmed her from the piano during the evening hours. Under the leadership of Ivan Domeroff, grand opera and classical selections were rendered with considerable skill. These evenings were very enjoyable. Some wag in the forecastle placed a notice on the foot of the mainmast to the effect that "The Foo Foo Band will give a performance on the quarter-deck, weather and other circumstances permitting, D.V. Admittance Nixy." On this occasion Mrs. Munro casually mentioned a piece of music which, she said, had taken New York and London by storm. Did Mr. Domeroff know it? She sang the melody; her beautiful voice, so wonderful and sweet, charmed us all. That scene is stamped upon my memory as the most pathetic episode of all my career.

Leaning over the poop rail were the members of the medical staff. Captain Lombard and Mr. Richester paused in their walk on the deck to listen. They stood beside Lester, who was seated in a deck-chair, covered with an oriental rug, and nursing his broken arm. On the quarterdeck stood Mrs. Munro clad in the silken robes of a Chinese kimono, whereon were worked in golden threads designs of dragons, beasts and birds. The mate was seated in an easy-chair, and I stood close by. The men were distributed in various postures round the main-fife rail and bits.

On the after hatch sat the band with Ivan nursing his great instrument upon his knees. Mrs. Munro

lifted up her voice and sang the opening passages of some operatic piece which was apparently well known to the carpenter, for he rose to his feet and said loudly: "Enough, dear madam, I will play it. Then I will tell you how and where it was composed."

How long he took to play that piece I do not know, but every instrument ever invented was imitated by his wonderful melodeon. Sometimes he played soft soul-searching passages, then broke out once more with the full force of the marvellous bass which rolled away like the sound of a church organ, causing one's nerves to thrill and vibrate in unison and harmony. When he finished he burst into tears.

Mrs. Munro silently approached him. I was going to his side, but Peter Haskell drew me back. There was a dead silence for a moment, broken only by the gentle lifting of the ship. The sudden outburst of grief of the great black-whiskered Russian made me realise that there are forms of emotion which overcome the strongest.

"You poor wonderful man," said the lady, laying her hand upon his arm. Then while the eyes of every member of the crew were fixed upon her, she kissed him. It was a kiss of veneration and admiration for a master player. Ivan rose to his feet, dried his eyes, and said awkwardly:

"Madam, forgive me. Forgive my weakness, but you have accidentally revived memories which I have long thought forgotten. For six years I was chained to the man who composed that music, in the salt mines of Siberia."

There was a movement of interest on the poop, and Doctors Brennan and Schwartz moved aft. But

Schwartz returned to the rail where stood the Professor, and said in very broken English:

"Ivan, don't. Let it sleep. Why for you about it speak?"

The mate glanced up as though he resented the German's interference. Then Ivan, not heeding the Doctor's remark, continued:

"In those days I was a prosperous shipbuilder living in the Port of Odessa and I was one of those who assisted to form working-class schools in the district. The Government placed all kinds of impediments in our way, so, being a member of a local musical circle, I suggested that at our concerts and musical gatherings we refuse to play the national anthem, and, if questioned, to say it was our protest against certain abuses by high officials of the Government.

"One night a party of Cossacks broke into my home forcing me into the streets and tearing me from my wife and children. They flung me into a vile prison, and after many weeks I was marched with a number of other poor souls across the country to St. Petersburg, to join the endless chain of exiles, all condemned by the Tsar to the mines of Omsk.

"Lady," he said, with tears streaming down his cheeks, "I will not tell you of my journey, of the hardships, of the six bitter years of slavery, or how Dr. Schwartz assisted me and my companion to escape. But we did escape. During the terrible years spent in the mines, my friend composed a piece of music which was registered note by note in the inner recesses of my brain. When we reached civilisation that music was placed on paper, but my friend's health had been undermined by the terrible climate of Siberia and the

hardships he had endured. So the day upon which his great masterpiece was given in public for the first time, he died. But his music will live for ever. Listen!"

Once more the notes rose and fell upon the still tropical night air. He surely seemed to be inspired by some unseen power. Mrs. Munro stood listening, deeply moved. Indeed, all hands seemed visibly affected. One by one the men disappeared forward, and the members of the band quietly rose and vanished into the shadows. When the music ceased, Mrs. Munro ventured feelingly: "Did you ever find your wife and children?"

"No, madam, my wife died of a broken heart shortly after my arrest, and my children died of cholera."

She placed her hands upon his shoulder and said kindly: "Please forgive me for reviving such sad memories."

She seemed quite unable to proceed, for she stood for a moment evidently much embarrassed, then walked towards the poop ladder, which she slowly climbed, and sank down upon the deck beside Lester's chair, burying her face in the folds of the rug which covered him, and burst into tears.

"Mary," said Lester kindly, "do not upset yourself in this way. You were not to know that the singing of that piece would produce such violent emotions."

She glanced into his eyes for a moment, and as I walked forward I heard her say: "One's own suffering sinks into insignificance when the tragedy of other lives becomes known."

I have often thought of that evening, and the truth of her statement. We carried the trade winds to within the twelfth degree of latitude south of the line. Then

they gradually petered out, dying away in spasmodic gusts as though loth to leave us. We were now in for a period of scorching days and sultry nights, with cloudless skies and moonless darkness, during which time the ship appeared to be the only living thing afloat. This period of stagnation became intolerable, and many times I saw Captain Lombard gazing at the pinnacle as though influenced by a desire to send her ahead to tow the ship out of the calm belt of equatorial waters. On the third morning of the calm, at daybreak, the pinnacle was ordered over the side, and with Steve Finlay in the engine-room I took her ahead and the great ocean tow commenced. We soon had the ship following at the rate of five knots, which was about all that could be reasonably expected, for towing a ship in a seaway is very different from towing in the land-locked waters of the Magellan Straits.

During this period I met with a misfortune which nearly cost me the loss of two fingers on the left hand. The towing-bars being fitted across the cockpit, enabled the tow-rope to slide from side to side as the pinnacle rolled in the swell. It was a difficult job to keep the boat on a compass course under such conditions, but after a time one grew accustomed to the erratic movements.

Steve was a congenial companion and during the lonely hours we had ample time to review the many strange events which had occurred since we first met in the Thames anchorage. He had stoked the fires and was seated on the steps of the cockpit, mopping the perspiration from his brow. The heat was intense. Presently several dolphins rose out of the water, quite close to us, proving that the noise of the exhaust-pipe

and propeller had no terror for them in spite of the supposition that they are the most timid fish in deep water. Perhaps they had come to investigate the unusual sight of a small boat towing a large ship. Some circled round the pinnacle, venturing very close. One beauty almost touched the starboard quarter. I seized the after towing-bar to lean outboard and gain a better view, when the boat gave a dive, and the tow-rope surged across from port to starboard, tearing the flesh from my hand and forearm, and crushing two fingers very badly. The shock was so sudden, I wondered for a moment what had happened. When I saw the blood spattered over the floor of the cockpit, I thought that something more serious had occurred, and Steve suggested that I signal for relief, but I refused, trying to make light of the accident.

At noon, when relief came, I was extremely thankful, for my arm was very painful. I was quickly attended by the doctors, who declared me on the sick list, which was rather vexing, as we anticipated whales in plenty in those latitudes.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### MOKI

WE were now in that part of the Pacific Ocean noted for its calms and variables, so, like good "sea saints" that we were, all hands settled down to the unpleasant task of trekking across the westerly set of the equatorial current, making what northin' we could with the help of the steam-pinnace. It was a very pleasing sensation to hear the cry from the crow's-nest "Blow-O, blow-O, blow-O!" There is something soul-stirring in that cry, which, alas, I shall hear no more. The discomforts of the protracted calms are forgotten, although we may possibly mutter a curse as we enter the boat, at not being able to use sail instead of oars. A long pull to the horizon under a blazing tropical sun is certainly not a job to crave for. "There she blows! Sperm whale ahead!"

Sure enough, on the skyline from port to starboard, could be seen a school of whales very leisurely blowing, and all hands were quickly at their posts eager to break the monotony. Joe Splendid took my place in the bow of No. 3. As soon as the boats touched the water, oars were flung out and an excited race began. It was useless trying to steer the ship, but the lighter sails were furled and the clews of the courses hoisted in the clew-garnets, ready for any emergency. Nursing my wounded hand, I could only look on as the idlers ac-



complished the task of preparing the ship to receive the carcase of a whale.

How the term "idlers" originated I do not pretend to know, but it is the most paradoxical phrase in seafaring jargon. In a whaling-ship it means all those not detailed for boatwork. The men left on the ship are often called upon to do a great deal more than those that go away in the boats. Everyone is kept busy from the mate to the cooks and stewards.

The period of inactivity was irksome and annoying to me. The mate on the bridge smiled his condolences. He knew that my whaleman's instinct caused me to resent having to look on, so I sat down by Mr. Lester. This was the first time that I had had a chance of a few moments' quiet conversation with him since the first days of his convalescence. Then he had been so overwhelming in his appreciations of what he called my plucky conduct in bringing Mrs. Munro and himself off the *Santa Barbara*, that I felt quite embarrassed. But now my shyness had completely vanished, and a spirit of comradeship sprang up between us.

He was a tall, dark-complexioned, round-faced fellow of about thirty years, but the lines in his face and forehead, together with his grey-streaked hair on his temples, made him look much older. His teeth were perfect and as white as a china teacup, and, being clean shaven, they showed to perfection every time he smiled. His was a smile which placed one at ease in a moment, and as I glanced into his eyes I did not wonder that Mrs. Munro loved him.

"Mr. Hedger," he said as his gaze followed the boats racing away to the horizon. "There is one question

I would like to ask you, and then I will never refer to the subject again."

"Go on, sir, I will do my best to answer," I returned, wondering what he had on his mind.

"Will you please tell me how you found the captain of the *Santa Barbara*?"

I hesitated a moment, wondering how to answer him. I remembered Mr. Haskell's story of Mrs. Munro's terrible conflict with the brutal man, and wondered if I should tell Lester that Mrs. Munro killed him. As I watched our whaleboats spreading out in the distance, I was at a loss for words, so perplexed was I, and not a little embarrassed.

"Surely Mrs. Munro has told you what happened after you were rendered senseless?" I questioned at last.

"Mrs. Munro has never referred to that terrible time, and I remember nothing whatever of what occurred after the fight, until I awoke on this ship."

"I wonder if it would set your mind at rest were I to tell you all that happened on the sinking ship as far as my knowledge carries me?"

"It certainly would, sir, and may save Mrs. Munro the trouble of some day repeating to me a story which must be hateful to her to remember."

I wondered if he knew that Mrs. Munro had confessed to me that she had killed the skipper, so I ventured:

"You will forgive me for hesitating to answer your question, but the secret is not mine alone."

He glanced at me suspiciously for a moment, then said:

"What do you mean? Mr. Hedger, did you not kill the captain of the *Santa Barbara*?"

I sat rooted to the chair. A cold sweat broke out all over me and a shudder ran down my backbone. Three weeks had passed since the tragedy and all that time he had been under the impression that I killed the captain to rescue Mrs. Munro. Now how did that thought get into his mind? I glanced at the man at the wheel, but he could not possibly hear our conversation. The mate, well forward on the poop deck, was supervising the idlers. Fortunately no one else was near, but I still hesitated. Personally I did not mind being accused of the death of that brutal master and I smiled inwardly at the thought, but after a moment or two I said:

"No, sir. I certainly did not kill him. He must have died some hours before our arrival."

He looked at me with a glad smile and seized my hand, saying warmly: "Good boy! You don't like to tell me that Mary—Mrs. Munro, killed him, do you? From what you say I know she did, and I am glad."

He lay back among the cushions and I realised by the glad light in his blue eyes that a great fear had been removed from his mind.

The dog at our feet sat up and gazed out to sea with a suddenness which startled me. He gently rose, with nose to the deck, ears laid flat back, and stretched his legs, wagging his great tail. He opened his huge mouth with a sleepy gape, then looking into my face, whined pitifully.

"What's the matter, Carlo?" For answer he wagged his tail and walked to the mizzen rigging, where he stood for a while gazing at the horizon.

I could see that one boat was fast, the distance was

too great to determine which. With the help of my binoculars I saw another boat flying northward, well fast to a big fish. To the north-west the other boat was tossing amidst a deal of white water. It was in this direction that the dog was looking, ever and anon sniffing, as though he scented danger.

There was evidently some sport for that boat's crew, and I was vexed at being prevented from participating in the hunt. Carlo poked his nose between the lanyards and barked loudly, then set up a long, wailing howl which echoed weirdly in the stillness of the calm. Then the man in the crow's-nest reported that a boat's crew was in difficulties. I sprang down the poop ladder to the gangway and into the pinnace. Strange to say, Carlo followed. We had never known him to show such intelligence.

I startled the deputy engineer into activity by shouting "Full speed ahead," and with my bandaged hand on the tiller cast off the lines as we shot ahead over the swell, flying through the water with the speed of an express train. Peter Haskell shouted after me: "Don't lose any time, sir, one boat has been badly smashed."

I glanced ahead, and low as I was on the waterline, I could see a great commotion going on. Every few seconds a shower of sparkling water would be flung upwards, and once or twice the flukes of a sperm flashed in the sunlight. Far away to the north-east lay a whale-boat beside a flag-bedecked carcase. The other boat was still dashing away to the northward. Impatiently I demanded more steam, but the engine was going at her topmost speed.

It seemed an eternity ere I could shout "Ease her!"

and I stood on the cabin top to gain a better view. What I saw astonished me.

The dead whale was awash, there was no sign of the boat, but each man had driven his knife into the tough hide and was hanging on for dear life to the floating mountain of blubber. Ark Royd had managed to scramble on to the head, and with a broken oar was keeping the great man-eating sharks from his struggling companions. I could not see the second mate, and my heart sank as I steered the pinnacle round, shooting, as I did so, a shark measuring something like twenty-five feet. A revolver was always kept loaded for that purpose in the pinnacle locker, and this time it proved useful.

When the unfortunate crew of No. 2 scrambled on board the pinnacle they seemed completely exhausted and unnerved. They squeezed the water from their clothing, then sought the cabin as a protection from the glaring heat. The look on old Ark's face told me that Mr. Richester had been killed. There was no need to question him. He went aft and worked the pinnacle along the side of the great fish, securing the rope to the flukes, then ordering full speed ahead.

In the cabin locker was an emergency outfit, so I administered a tot of rum to steady the men who but a moment before had been face to face with a terrible death. I thought with a shudder of the fate of Mr. Richester. What could have taken place? When I questioned the stroke oarsman he said: "I do not know, it happened so suddenly."

Richester was not what might be termed an expert whaler, but he was an excellent boatman, although he had never previously served in a whaling-ship. Cap-

tain Lombard considered he was quite safe with Ark Royd, than whom no greater harpooner ever lived. I knew that the Captain would be dreadfully cut up, for he and his son-in-law were boon companions. Then his wife! The thought of that lady's grief filled me with sympathy. Carlo sprang to the cabin top and wagged his tail, then going forward stood for a moment on the hatch, looking at the dejected crew as though he were counting them. He certainly understood that something was wrong.

"What's the matter, Carlo?" I asked sadly. He came and sat beside me, whining piteously. Presently he put his nose on my knee, and I declare I saw a tear drop from his eyes.

At last we reached the ship and I reported what had happened. The whale was secured and preparations were made to extract the contents of the cavity. I set off again to the horizon for another carcase.

I had been forbidden to use my injured hand. It was certainly very painful, but nothing to be compared with the ache at my heart as I thought of the effect of Mr. Richester's death in certain circles. In making for the north I steered wide, circling round the vicinity in the vain hope that Richester might possibly be clinging to some part of the wreckage. All kinds of possibilities took possession of my mind as we jumped the waves.

I could see the Captain's boat in the distance, moored to their carcase, but I loathed the task of breaking the news of the tragedy to him. At last I was forced to do so. What I said I do not now remember, but when he sank down upon the steering-seat, clutching his heart as though it had suddenly ceased to beat, I realised

that I had sounded the death knell of the greatest gentleman who ever commanded a ship. I would have given my life to have spared him such a blow.

He gave orders to his crew to pull back to the ship, and we took the whale in tow, coming up on Joe Splendid's boat during the journey. His whale lay awash some distance to the north, a floating island on which was perched a flock of sea-birds. Joe, taking my place at the helm of the pinnace, said: "This, I think will be the end of the chapter."

"What do you mean, Joe?" I asked in surprise.

"Well, 'Chips' told me on the quiet, that he would not be surprised to see our expedition terminate any day. For a long time the medical staff has been impatient to return to Germany with the result of their labour and I think this last tragic happening will just about finish them."

"It is a pity they did not make up their minds before," I returned. "It might have saved Richester."

"Yes," he said sadly, "perhaps it might, but you must surely know, Harry" (using my old name, which sounded strange after the distinctive prefix "Mr."), "that if a man is born to die at the tail of a whale, he will certainly die that way, and no other."

Joe had witnessed many such tragedies during his long career, and he spoke in a manner typical of the deep-sea fisherman. As we moored the carcass, I could see that a gloom had fallen on the ship.

It was drawing close to noon. I could not take my place on the poop deck with Captain Lombard and Peter Haskell, who, sextant in hand, were preparing to shoot the sun. I saw that the Captain was much affected, and had it not been for the fact that he wished

to find the ship's exact position, that he might record the exact spot where the accident occurred, I am sure he would not have appeared on deck. The mate came to the rail and said: "Hold fast in the pinnace, Mr. Hedger!" Then he called Joe on deck, and I wondered what next was going to happen. Was it possible the Captain was going to search for his son-in-law? I was soon to know, for Joe returned with two plugs of explosives, a long fuse and a blubber orger. We were to destroy the carcass floating in the distance, that it might not be a menace to shipping.

"What you say is quite correct, Joe," I said, "the doctors have made up their minds that they have seen enough whaling. I wonder what will happen next?"

"Nothing much. I suppose the medical staff will leave us at Honolulu and make all speed back to Germany."

I did not answer. I was certainly determined to make the voyage my last one, in a whaling-ship especially. But I expected several months would elapse before we paid off, even if we did not take the old ship back to Europe.

"Anyway," continued Joe, "this is indeed an unexpected ending to a whaling voyage. I'm damned if I like this 'ere display of fireworks."

"Anyhow, it is very much in keeping with the other surprises that the *Anna Lombard* has sprung upon us," I said, "from the very first day we joined her in London."

"Yes, what you say is perfectly true, but what I can't make out is why the contents of this 'ere cavity cannot be used now the blooming thing is dead."

"I don't know, Joe, unless it is to conserve the sup-



ply of coal for the pinnacle, which may be called upon to do a great amount of towing ere we reach the Sandwich group."

When we drew alongside we could see the scavengers at work making great inroads into the carcase. They had not noticed our approach, for the engines were stopped some distance away, to prevent running past her. It was a wonderful sight, to lean over the side and watch the antics of the monsters.

"Joe," I said, "this may be our last opportunity of witnessing such a sight. Take your time, old shipmate, take your time. There is no hurry, that is, if you are not anxious for your dinner."

"My dinner will keep," he returned with a smile. "There's one thing about this old ship, and that is the wonderful food. Sometimes I think we get too much."

I did not heed his words, for my eyes were glued to the living, seething mass of hungry fish, fighting around the carcase in thousands. Joe climbed on to its back and told me the names of the various species as he worked: the porpoise (*Phocaena communis*), the killer (*Orca gladiator*), the thresher shark (*Alopias vulpes*), the flying-fish (*Exocoetus evolvans*), the great man-eating shark (*Carcharias melanopterus*), and the tiny pilot-fish (*Caranx*). The ray was present in goodly numbers, and a strange-looking creature ablaze with scarlet and bright blue. Joe pointed it out as a deep-sea pin-cushion. The dolphin (*Delphinus communis*), the king-fish (*Seriola lalandii*), and a fish resembling a carp, and scores of others whose names we did not know.

The carcase presented a tough surface almost as hard as india-rubber, with apparently no place where a tooth-

hold could be found. Some great shark would drive his massive jaws into the mass, and, with a twist of his powerful tail, gouge out a lump, fully a hundredweight. If he managed to get away with it, his place was immediately taken by scores of others, and thus the feast continued.

I was greatly interested in the actions of a very large female shark, which lay well out of the scrambling mob. This creature was over twenty-five feet long, and ever and anon, as she lay quite still, excepting for a slight movement of her tail, she would open her mouth, and out would dart scores of tiny sharklets. These pretty little silver creatures dived into the depths and returned with morsels of the feast almost as large as themselves. They were often in peril of being gobbled up by their larger kind, and how they escaped death was beyond my comprehension. The pilot-fish, that glorious velvet and fawn-coloured beauty, and beloved escort of the great ocean shark, darted hither and thither, guarding the flock of its great mistress from danger. At the least sign of trouble, the whole flock of sharklets rushed into their mother's mouth, and she quickly carried them out of danger into the depths below. From that day I have never liked to kill a shark. Because of that display of the mother instinct, I have been the shark's protector.

It was during this episode that I saw another sight which I shall never forget. Joe had placed one of the charges deep down in the carcase, and scrambled along cautiously towards the tail, towing the orger to prepare to insert the other charge, when he casually observed, "I wonder what's up now, all the fish have cleared off."

My heart stood still with horror, for I remembered

the great octopus which only a few days before played such a prominent part in just such another drama as this, and I endeavoured to penetrate the depths. This time I cautioned Joe to hurry, and the engineer to stand by his levers, for now there was no wonderfully coloured razor-back to save the situation, and if the horrible creature caught sight of our pinnacle, nothing would prevent him from entwining us in his slimy embrace, and conveying us to his grotto-like den on the bed of the ocean. Joe, wondering at my demands for speed, looked up and said:

"What's up? You look mighty white and pasty."

"Hurry up, Joe, let's get away. There's another of those gigantic cuttles coming. My boat only just escaped by the merest chance a few days ago from one of them."

"Cuttlers?" interrupted Joe, "that ain't no cuttle!"

There suddenly rose out of the water a monster much longer than the carcase of the whale. It was like a huge conger-eel, except for the strange perpendicular dorsal fin which ran down its back for fully forty feet. I once remember seeing one of these ugly fish caught off the Old Head of Kinsale on the Irish Coast. It was sixteen feet long, and six inches round the thickest part. It was hung in the main rigging of our ship, and two days later someone proclaimed it lifeless, but upon being approached, it lashed out, very much alive, in spite of the fact that it had been hanging with a rope through its gills for over forty-eight hours.

This thing which appeared beneath us was fully three feet in circumference at the thickest part, but it tapered away to nothing, vanishing in a sharp-pointed tail like that of a man-eating shark, which was deco-

rated with gorgeously coloured fins flashing gold and crimson in the sunlight. The side fins seemed to have a perpetual wave running along the whole body as a sinuous convulsive movement, and each movement reflected some beautiful colour. The fins were of some transparent tissue, stretched over bright yellow rod-like bones, closely resembling the transparent membrane of the flying-fish's wings. The head was like that of the cod with long sharp jaws armed with formidable teeth.

When the herd of scavengers took their hurried departure, they left large portions of blubber hanging from the side of the carcase. The great creature seized one of them, and throwing his long body at right angles, turned over and over with lightning rapidity, first one way, then the other, tearing, biting and chewing, gorging itself on the softest blubber.

"What's the name of that creature, Joe?" I said, as he re-entered the pinnacle. Before applying the match to the fuse he leaned over the side, saying:

"That's a Moki, better known as a deep-sea conger."

I watched its movements for a moment or two, then Joe said as he lit the fuse: "Go ahead, sir, our shot will get that monster. I'd like to see 'im at closer quarters."

Away we raced out of the danger zone, and clear of the explosion. I questioned Joe as to where he had previously seen the Moki.

"They are sometimes seen round the Marshalls and Carolines, and I have heard tell in the Marquesas Islands. They are a menace to the natives, and every fish in the sea 'ates it, because of its quick movements. Did yer notice 'ow it tore the blubber off the carcase. . . . Up she rises!" he exclaimed, as two very loud reports sounded on the still air like dull sounds of dis-

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

tant thunder. A great wall of white water, intermingled with portions of the whale, rose into the air, then all was quiet, and we returned to the *Anna Lombard*, for when we circled the scene of the explosion not a sign of the Moki could we see.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE MARQUESAS

AT eight o'clock, on the changing of the watches at eventide, all hands were assembled aft, and Mr. Haskell informed the crew that at a certain hour on that day, October 23, 188—, in lat.  $10^{\circ} 2' 47''$  south, longitude  $125^{\circ} 21' 36''$  west, Mr. Richester, the second mate, was killed in a whale hunt.

"There is no need to enlarge upon the occurrence. You must all by this time be fully conversant with the sad details, but there are certain formalities to be observed, and in the absence of Captain Lombard, I will announce that Mr. Hedger will be second mate, Mr. Splendid third, Casey will be bos'n, the rating of bos'n's mate will be filled by Stockley, and as that is all the promotion the vacancy involves, I dismiss the assembly."

The ceremony was not a very lengthy one, but I did resent being forced to relinquish my post as aide-de-camp to Peter Haskell, and before I went below I told him so, suggesting that Joe or Ark was more fitted for such a post as second mate. But my chief would not hear of it. He reminded me that the position was mine by right—by law, therefore I would be very foolish not to accept the post, as Captain Lombard thought I was quite capable of sailing the ship in a seaway and worthy of the position of officer of the watch. So re-

luctantly I sought my cabin, for my hand was extremely painful. In the many exciting events since daybreak, I had neglected to have it dressed. I was not keen to seek the aid of either of the Germans, and Professor Lun was in close attention upon the Captain, who had been seized with a bad heart attack during the afternoon. As a nurse Kong surpassed them all, so to him I went for assistance.

I found him in the cuddy, so he took me to his cabin. It was a fine large room, a portion of the fore-cabin, and next to an apartment occupied by the cooks and stewards, his fellow-countrymen. It was the first time I had been in his room, which was decorated in true Oriental splendour, and I was very interested. There was no bunk, but a swinging cot suspended from the beams made a comfortable bed. Here was another fine collection of books—English, Chinese, Latin, French and German—pictures of Chinese ladies and gentlemen gorgeously apparelled, cabinets filled with wonderful ornaments, bronzes and plaques, pottery and antique brass, and the weirdest-looking swords and guns I had ever seen outside an old curiosity shop, but all so precious to the heart of my Oriental friend. He prepared lint and bandages with the deftness of a professional, and as he bathed and dressed my hand with a tenderness that equalled any woman's, I said:

"Poor Richester. 'Tis terrible for one so young to be cut off in such a way."

"Yes," he answered, "but it is not for the dead that we should sorrow. Rather be glad. It is with his wife that my sympathy lies. Also with Captain Lombard, who has lost a son to whom he was much attached, and myself, for I too have lost a friend."

This man's philosophy was sometimes very strange. It reminded me of Mr. Jones. But where the sailmaker was steeped in pessimistic superstitions Kong understood the great scheme of creation. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to his Oriental views of life. His English education had given him power to penetrate the English mind and thoroughly analyse the psychology of English ideas. My diary records that we carried our discussion on this occasion far into the night watch.

"Life," said he, "is an incomprehensible force which animates all things, visible and invisible. How it was first created none can tell, because that secret is locked up in the heart of the Supreme Force, and is only understood by those selected to emulate the Buddha."

"Who selects them and how are they known?" I asked, wondering what he meant.

"They are known by the truth, and the wisdom, and the grandeur of their lives. They are found amongst all races; they have lived at all ages. The light of their philosophy radiates throughout history like bright stars in the firmament of human understanding."

I could not follow his meaning so remained silent, smoking one of his fine cigars. Presently he continued, as if anxious to impart to me the full extent of his own understanding of these things:

"Life, as the commercial races understand it, has two forms, the physical and the spiritual. But to the Oriental, life is continuous and single. While here, we inhabit this case of flesh and bone, but when we die, out we go like steam from a pot——"

"I presume," I interrupted, "that by the commercial races you mean the civilised races?"

I was sorry immediately after, for he turned on me



suddenly and without changing expression said seriously:

"Civilised races! There are none. No nation is civilised—yet."

"Come, Kong," I said, "what about England, America, France, Germany and all the rest of Europe?"

Sometimes his statements both interested and puzzled me. Now I was amused. His answer was destined to have a remarkable effect upon my after life, and as I grew older and my eyes became open to the many truths he proclaimed concerning the vicissitudes of life in general, the words of this wonderful man would ring in my ears, and I often imagine I can hear his voice drawl:

"Mr. Hedger, how can a nation be called civilised when one section of its people lives in poverty and the other lives in luxury?"

As I had no answer ready, he continued after a slight pause:

"Civilisation cannot become real under the commercial system, which is simply a phase in human development. But I weary you, and I apologise for my lack of thought."

"No, Kong, although I have had a most strenuous day and my nerves are rather unstrung, I would like to ask you one or two questions, for I must tell you that Mr. Jones often speaks of what he calls 'occult science,' but he seems to be a little mixed, and I cannot understand his meaning."

Kong looked at me sideways and drew long clouds of smoke from his pipe, then with a faint smile he said meditatively:

"Our sailmaker is certainly endowed with what is

called by the Western races 'second sight.' It is a power which may be developed for either good or evil purposes. To understand that force—the creative force—requires a deal of study in which material things play no part. The guiding force behind Mr. Jones is a strange mixture, one part of which belongs to this life, and one part to the life beyond."

Again I could not quite follow him, but made mental notes, that I might on some future occasion study this thing for myself.

"You must know, my friend," he went on kindly, "that in the realm of spirits there are souls which are earthbound. They carry over with them no particular desire to reach the lighter realms of intelligence. As they were impressionists in earth life, so they continue in the spirit world, and weaker intelligences in the flesh are often susceptible to their machinations, much in the same way as stronger minds overrule weaker minds in earthly life."

"Then you think that Mr. Jones does not understand the science he speaks of?"

"A little education is extremely dangerous to the human development, no matter whether one is born under eastern or western skies. It is awe and nervous fear permeating a mind once controlled by dogmatic superstition that influences our sailmaker. Once he realises that what he calls occult science is a natural law which operates throughout nature, he will find peace, and attract to himself a greater spiritual understanding."

He was certainly getting beyond me, and I began to think that the tragedy of the day had in some way affected his brain. Or was he trying to transmute the understanding and intelligence of an English high-

school education into that of an Oriental? His philosophy was beyond my comprehension. It was a weird subject never before discussed in my hearing on board ship. Indeed, it seemed to be as far removed from the general conversation of sailormen as the two extremities of the earth from one another. It made me feel that all the theories and stories I had heard in my early life were more or less fairy-tales. All I knew was that one of our number had been suddenly torn from our midst. The voyage in future would lose much of its pleasure and charm, for the spirit of gloom had descended upon us. There is no other calling in the world where the loss of one member is so keenly felt, and as I left Kong to turn in, my mind was in a state of chaos. When I went to sleep I dreamed of giant congers and gigantic squids, and was exceedingly glad when at eight bells I relieved Peter Haskell.

For the next few days we rolled in the trough of the great ocean swell completely helpless. The burning heat of the sun and the unsteady rolling of the vessel made life anything but pleasant. The saloon table was deserted except for Haskell and myself. Captain Lombard had been stricken with another stroke, and now lay prostrate. The skill of Professor Lun and his medicated spermaceti were of little avail. The kind Professor informed me that there was every hope of the skipper's recovery, but the shock of Richester's death and the depression caused by the excessive calm had been a great strain on his nerves. I gathered also that he had been considerably worried about the actual termination of the voyages. The quarrels of the Germans were likely to affect the issue and bring financial ruin. These important factors tended to undermine the health

of the Captain. The task of rendering medical aid evolved upon the Professor, and it was during this time that Mrs. Munro proved herself a heroine. Her devotion and attention seemed inexhaustible. Both the Captain and Mr. Lester were taken under her wing with untiring devotion.

The German doctors absolutely refused to take any further part in the activities of the expedition. Why, I do not know, any more than Kong vaguely hinted at a quarrel that had risen over some technical point and they were now anxious to return to civilisation.

Kong told me that they lay in their bunks reading and smoking, keeping the stewards always on the jump with their unreasonable demands.

"Our expedition is now at an end; that is, as far as catching whales is concerned," said Peter Haskell. "As soon as we get a slant of wind we will shape our course for the Marquesas Group, where we hope to fall in with a mail-boat or island trading-steamer, to tranship our passengers for some American port. Our subsequent movements will depend upon the Captain's health."

The slant of wind came one morning as the sun rose. Fortunately it caught us abaft the quarter. The helmsman, ever alert, steadied the ship to meet it. Every stitch of sail that the old ship could carry was set, and we skipped through the water on a course N.N.W. logging six, seven, to ten knots. Day after day this fine breeze lasted, then we sighted the southernmost island of the group, which is called Fatuhiva, sailing the next morning into the beautiful harbour of Nukuhiva island, where we dropped anchor just inside the inner reef, a lovely spot which resembles an ocean park. So trans-

parent was the water that we could see many forms of coral and sea anemones, giant serrate or bladder wrack, with great leaves of various tints and shadings, creating with the many lichens a perfect medley of colour, amidst which moved shoals of brilliantly coloured fish which I know only as rainbow-fish.

Down the harbour, before a tiny village, lay a steamer flying the French flag. I subsequently discovered her to be a mail steamer of a newly formed company of French traders. At the time of which I write such wonderful old ships as the *Isabelle*, the *White Cloud*, the *Nimrod* and many others, had monopolised the trade of Oceania. These pioneers of commerce had exploited the island natives since the voyages of the early Spaniards. They had introduced into native life many diseases and most of the vices of the white men, until at last certain of the natives had developed into devils and demons, devoid of fear and reason.

As I glanced at the green hills surrounding the harbour, I longed to explore the interior, although stories of native risings and murder of white traders were still recent happenings. This paradise of the Pacific called me to witness its beauty—a beauty undefiled by the hand of man, a state of natural charm, which is gradually passing from this planet for ever.

Kong told me that I was wanted below, and when I entered the Captain's cabin I was shocked to see the change wrought in so short a time. I could hear a heated discussion going on in the doctor's stateroom, as usual in German. I knew that something unusual had occurred, because everyone was seriously thoughtful.

The Captain greeted me with a painful smile, then

Mr. Haskell handed me a note addressed to the captain of the French steamer, saying :

"Mr. Hedger, you will please deliver this letter and return to me with an answer as quickly as possible."

I realised that something serious was afoot. What Mr. Haskell had said was true—the voyage was over, but what had caused the end to come so soon? I took my place in the pinnace, gliding swiftly over the water, passing several canoes full of natives, who watched our progress in manifest amazement. No doubt our pinnace and general smart appearance made them think the *Anna Lombard* was an old-time warship. They were a splendid type of savage, the women being particularly handsome and graceful. They wore a kind of flax mat which covered their lower limbs. The upper parts of their bodies, which were entirely naked, shone as if polished with oil.

As we sped down the harbour I could see tiny huts and shelters here and there amidst the groves of well-laden fruit-trees, and when we rounded a bluff headland, a village opened to our view, before which, on a sandy beach, were a number of long canoes round which many children were playing. The steamer was discharging cases of goods on one side, and taking in bags of dried coconuts on the other. A fleet of native boats swarmed round her like flies round a honey-pot.

When I drew up to the gangway, I saw that her name was *Le Havre* of Dunkirk. She was an iron steamer of some six hundred tons and seemed a comfortable enough ship, though somewhat ancient in appearance, for her quaintly rounded quarterdeck and flat stern made her resemble a Spanish galleon.

I smiled inwardly as I mounted the gangway. Our

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smart naval-like appearance drew all eyes to us. I had donned a white linen suit which added to the delusion, and no one would think we had come from a whaling-ship.

A Kanaka quartermaster conducted me to the upper bridge, where a very tall person, dressed in white-and-yellow-striped pyjamas tied round the middle with rope-yarns, greeted me in true American style:

"Hullo, kid! Watcher want?"

"Are you the captain of this ship?" I questioned, somewhat surprised at this greeting and appearance.

"You bet I am. I'm skipper of this damned frog-eating ark!"

I handed him the note, requesting an answer, and as he glanced through it his eyes opened in manifest joy and pleasure. He seemed like a man suddenly reprieved from a life sentence of enforced inertia.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

THE skipper took a turn or two up and down the bridge deck as if to subdue his nervous excitement, which the reading of the letter had produced. Presently he shouted for a Mr. McFaden, and when that person came aft I was certain that he was no Britisher, for I saw a huge thick-set Dutchman with a face closely resembling a full moon.

"Listen, Mac," said the skipper, ignoring my presence as he read aloud: "'Can you find accommodation for five passengers in your first-class—one lady and four gentlemen? And how much cargo space have you available?'"

Surely cargoes must have been very scarce, for I saw Mac's face light up. He smacked his lips, then grabbed my hand in his fat paw, saying in pidgin-English:

"Goot for yous, me lad. Yous bring us cargo, dis treep vil pay vone passage to Holland."

"To hell with yer Dutch jargon, Mac," interrupted the skipper excitedly. "You go see what space we've got. I'll invite our young friend to drink with me. He will accept my invitation. Then we all 'll be doing something useful."

The Dutchman shuffled forward and the skipper turned to me, saying:

"Ever seen a Dutch Scotty?"



"No, but we include in our crew a Maltese Scotsman." And I told him the joke of the Thames-side shipping-office—a joke now forgotten by the crew of the *Anna Lombard*. But the skipper of the *Le Havre* nearly cracked his sides with laughter when he heard the story.

"Hell of a hole this is," said he. "Lucky for you that you found us at anchor. You might wait here for six or seven months and not find another steamer enter this harbour."

"When do you sail, Captain?" I questioned. For answer he filled two glasses with beautiful French wine, and holding up his glass, said:

"Here's to your coming, and the south wind which blew you hither, and may the blessings of all 'fed-up' island traders go with you when you leave this hellish garden of Eden."

I drank my wine, not caring to question him further. Presently he repeated: "Hell of a hole, these islands. If you ever dream of leaving sailing-ships, don't join an island trader thinking that your life will be a pleasant one. Come here, lad," and he once more led me to the deck, where he pointed on shore

"Look at those flower-bedecked hills. You'd think such beauty had but lately dropped down from heaven. Let me tell you, lad, those hills are simply alive with devils and demons, who are as nimble as a cat and possess as many lives. When they see a boatload of white sailormen making for the shore, they send their young women and girl children to promenade the beach, in an angelic state of nudity. Then when these ladies have enticed the innocent sailors into the bush, out rush the devils and spear the white men, and such feasting and

gorging takes place. Their favourite hash is seasoned and flavoured with white-man gravy."

I did not know if he was trying to scare me, or merely spinning a "cuffer." One thing I do know. I liked the flavour of his wine, and wondered why this disreputable-looking Yankee was in charge of a French ship. I was doubtful whether he could speak a word of French. I also wondered why he lazed about the deck in pyjamas in such close proximity to lady passengers, for I had caught a glimpse of some white ladies below on the saloon deck.

Presently the Dutchman McFaden climbed to the bridge and said something in French to the captain, and I was forced to realise that I had under-estimated his powers as a linguist. He turned to me, and after a moment or two of mental calculation, said:

"Tell yer skipper, sonny, that I'll take all he can give me, in both cargo and passengers, especially if the terms are acceptable, and worth my while."

I saluted respectfully and was soon steaming down the harbour in the pinnace. When I returned to my ship with the reply, a rather lengthy despatch was given me with which I returned to the *Le Harre*, and as I handed the captain this second note, he looked at me sharply and said:

"What, again? Want another drink of my bright sparkling wine?"

I ignored his greeting, and he read the note aloud, as though for my special benefit.

"Thank you for accommodation. We would like to charter space for six hundred barrels of oil and some cases of machinery. Could this be arranged? Shall we come alongside of you or will you tranship into

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lighters? Payment will be made immediately upon landing. Will leave the fixing of price to yourself or your owners."

He folded the note, requesting me to follow him to his room, and once more he filled two glasses, pushing one towards me as he said:

"Here's to you, sir, and if you would care to accept a few bottles of this brand I will order my steward to hand them to your boatmen."

"Thank you," I replied appreciatively, for it was indeed the most beautiful wine I had ever tasted. He left me alone for a few moments, but soon returned, and said:

"Tell your Captain that to-morrow at dawn I will be alongside him, where he is now at anchor. We can then discuss terms and commence operations immediately."

We spent the rest of the day preparing to tranship the medicated spermaceti and whale oil, and towards evening I managed to hold a brief conversation with Kong. From him I gathered that Lester was looking forward to soon returning to America, as the *Le Havre* would probably land them at some Peruvian port, where they could tranship to San Francisco. Whatever became of our guests, I wished them every happiness. But this unexpected breaking up of the expedition caused Kong some uneasiness for the health of Captain Lombard, for the whole of his life's savings had been invested in the undertaking.

The machinery in the laboratory was dismantled by the carpenter, assisted by the steward's staff. The jealously guarded plant was packed in cases and placed

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on deck under the watchful eye of the Professor. Both the Germans failed to appear.

The next day not at daybreak, as the Yankee skipper had promised, but well towards noon, the *Le Havre* dropped down the harbour after a deal of fuss and shouting on the part of the captain, who proved himself a perfect juggler of words, cursing fluently in French, English and Kanaka, and providing no end of amusement for the Lombardians.

I stood on the bridge of the steamer supervising the work of transhipment. Several times I found the blustering Yankee beside me. He was full of admiration for the *Anna Lombard*, and by very cautious interrogation tried to induce me to talk about the voyage. This I refused to do. At first I thought by evasive answers to let him see that I did not appreciate his questioning. But when he told me that only a few weeks before he had left the port of Callio, where he had sent a newspaper report to the effect that an Anglo-German Scientific Expedition, that was working in the interests of the Royal Geographical Society, had put into Talcahuano—Was that ship the *Anna Lombard*?—I did not enlighten him, but suggested that he take the report for granted. Furthermore, he would receive as passengers two famous German doctors who PERHAPS might give him all the information he required. But I did not offer much for his chances.

Doctors Brennan and Schwartz sent all their luggage to the steamer by the stewards of the *Anna Lombard*, and during the evening went on board themselves, without a word of farewell to anyone. That was the last I saw of them.

The reason of the sudden termination of the voyage

—as I have said—I did not know. It certainly could not have been the tragic death of Mr. Richester, because the estrangement of the medical staff was plainly manifest before we entered the Chilean anchorage.

“If the expedition has proved a failure from a scientific point of view, why not make it a success financially,” I asked Mr. Haskell as we stood awaiting the dinner gong that evening in the glorious coolness of the full moonlight. I was greatly relieved to hear him say that such was Captain Lombard’s intention. The tanks on the deck-house were no longer needed as storage for the spermaceti. These would be converted into try-works, and there was not the slightest doubt but that we would soon be a full ship, and a ready market could always be found for a cargo of whale oil.

In the absence of Captain Lombard, the honours of the table fell to my chief. Mrs. Munro sat beside him. She appeared to be very sad, and gazed across the table at Kong and me with tear-filled eyes as she said sorrowfully:

“I cannot realise that I am about to leave you all. Your treatment of me has been wonderful. I shall never forget the *Anna Lombard*.”

Peter Haskell leaned towards her and lifted his wine-glass as he said: “Madam, may the tragedy of the *Santa Barbara* mark the commencement of an everlasting happiness for both you and Mr. Lester.”

That was the only toast honoured on this solemn occasion, for on the morrow there would be a general break-up of the after-guard, and we were all more or less affected by the sadness of the parting.

During the first hour of the middle watch I walked the deck silently meditating on this last phase of our

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famous voyage. The steamer beside us rose like a black smoking monstrosity, misnamed a ship. I resented the unhallowed presence of the *Le Havre* beside the graceful *Anna Lombard*, and as the light of the moon fell over the distant hills the spire-like formation of the summits stood out against the sky like giant cathedral towers. They presented a picture of wondrous beauty, which was marred when I turned and saw the steamer alongside of us. The solitude of the night was broken ever and anon by the noise of coal-shoveling in the steamer's stokehold and the shouts of Kanaka firemen, or perhaps by the cry of a child in one of the sleeping-berths which opened off the saloon deck. I paused under the mizzen rigging to survey the moonbeams as they played amidst the swaying, waving fronds of feathery coconut, breadfruit or banana trees. I tried to form mind pictures of the many tragedies that had been enacted on these islands since the day of their discovery; the many attempts made by courageous missionaries to introduce Christianity to the people; the many stories told of blackbirding—those despicable creatures, disguised as honest traders, who but a few years ago had made huge sums of money by kidnapping natives from various islands and compelling them to work, under conditions which were often worse than slavery, in the plantations of the islands capitalised by the whites.

I was thus musing when I heard a light foot behind me, and turning, saw Mrs. Munro with an Oriental silken shawl round her shoulders.

"Am I intruding?" she asked sweetly.

"No, madam, I am alone but for the man on the look-out, and he is too far away to hear anything that may be said."

"I am glad you are alone," she returned. "I wish to talk to you, if I may. First, I wish to thank you for the way in which you have kept my secret."

I knew that she was alluding to the skipper of the *Santa Barbara*. It did seem profane to mention that tragedy on such a night as this. But as she was leaving us on the morrow, and it was scarcely possible that we would meet again, it was, I suppose, only natural that she should mention the most important factor of our meeting.

"I hope you will soon forget that terrible affair," I said awkwardly.

"Yes, I hope so too," she replied, and after a brief pause, continued:

"As soon as we reach America, Mr. Lester and I will be married, and as time progresses I shall no doubt be too happy to think of the terrible episode that drew us together. But I shall never forget the hospitality of the officers of the *Anna Lombard*."

She placed her hand on my arm and gazed into my face, saying seriously:

"Mr. Hedger, I hope some day that we may meet again. One never knows what fate has in store. But always remember this, that somewhere on the American continent you have friends who owe you a great debt; one they would gladly repay. If you are ever near this address (and she handed me a slip of paper), I most sincerely hope you will call upon us."

She held out her hand, saying:

"Good-bye, Mr. Hedger, I shall always pray for your happiness. Good-bye."

In a moment she was gone, and I stood wondering what fate would have been hers had not Mr. Lester been

mate of the schooner. It was too horrible to contemplate, and the sea was well rid of such a beast as the captain of the *Santa Barbara*.

The next day Captain Lombard's report of the wreck of the schooner would be despatched to the outside world, and the news would soon be known in every important port in America. But the world would never know how her captain met his death, for that knowledge was locked up in the breasts of four people.

The next day the transshipment was resumed with the first sign of dawn, and work continued until noon, when the last barrel was hoisted from the hold of the *Anna Lombard* and stowed away in the main hold of the steamer.

Captain Lombard was strong enough to appear on deck, supported by Kong and one of his assistants. I did not think that he should have undertaken the task of climbing the companion stairs, for he looked so frail and ill, but I subsequently gathered that he wished to prove to the Professor that his services were not required. That kind person had offered to stay with us as far as Honolulu to supervise the Captain's treatment. The Captain would not hear of it. I overheard him say:

"Your place is in Berlin to cover your rights. So please, my dear Professor, do not think of sacrificing your life's work. You owe it to suffering humanity to prove that those two fools are entirely wrong. So please don't worry about me. As you see, this momentary indisposition will soon pass away. Long before we cross the line I will be myself."

I could see by the look on the Professor's face that he had his doubts, and by the Captain's reply that the



quarrel was no ordinary dispute but a serious breach of agreement which eventually might end in financial ruin.

Mrs. Munro and Mr. Lester once more pressed my hand in farewell, and I must say that my heart went with them. Then they boarded the steamer, accompanied by the dog Carlo, and passed out of my life for ever.

Ivan Domeroff came aft, followed by two members of the steward's staff carrying his baggage. He carried his precious melodeon, not trusting it to other hands. He signalled the Chinamen to take his belongings to the steamer, then held his hand out to Captain Lombard and said:

"Good-bye, Captain Lombard, remember I shall always watch your interests no matter what happens."

Then he climbed to the deck of the steamer. The Professor was the last to leave us, and like the gentleman that he was, said good-bye to everyone in turn.

After the ropes were cast adrift and the steamer gently glided into deep water, Joe Splendid, standing by my side, said:

"Of all the surprises sprung upon us by this old ship, this breaking up of our happy family is the greatest and most complete."

He then went forward to supervise the heaving of the anchor. Mr. Haskell turned to me and said, as the steamer passed out to sea:

"Our deep-sea bubble has burst, Mr. Hedger. May the next phase of our voyage have a better termination."

I scarcely knew how to answer him, for it must be remembered I knew nothing of the circumstances leading to the dispute. I was only a junior officer—an out-

sider, as it were, part of the working crew of the ship—and had it not been for the many interesting details passed on to me by the mate, I should have known nothing concerning the inner purposes of the expedition. However, thought I, it is no business of mine. Life on board in future may perhaps be a little more strenuous, but the conditions will remain the same. To the sailorman in those days, conditions of service were everything.

Two large canoes came alongside laden with delicious fruit, and needless to say, the natives very quickly sold out. We could have taken three times the amount. As it was, great bunches of half-ripe bananas hung from boat-skids and transoms. When asked why they had not sought to trade with us before, the native spokesman said the headman or chief of the tribes would not permit trading while the *Le Havre* was in port, for the captain was a bad man.

The anchor was lifted at 3.30 P.M. and, under lower topsails, we passed through the tiny islands and coral reefs, which were like portions of some fairyland arising in our course to intercept our progress. Canoes filled with natives on the outlying rocks, hastened away upon our approach.

From my position on the forecastle head, where I conned the ship through the shoaly waters, I could see these natives tumble into their canoes and paddle for dear life to more protected waters.

When I remarked upon their apparent fright to Ark Royd, he said:

"They no doubt think we are a requiting ship. The exploits of the notorious Bully Hayes and Precie, Jack

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Wright and many other scoundrels are still fresh in their memory."

Steering a westerly course with just a shade of north-in', we made the landfall by sunset, and at midnight, under all sail, stood to the N.N.W., carrying a fine breeze until within a hundred and fifty miles of the equator.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### CO-OPERATIVE WHALING

A NOTICE was posted on a board provided for the purpose, and fixed under the fore-castle head, stating that the aim of the expedition had been successfully accomplished, and now that the medical staff had returned to Europe circumstances made it necessary to either seek some American port and pay off, or continue to fish the Pacific for whale for commercial purposes. Captain Lombard had decided to continue. He would like to inform the crew that from the time of departing from the anchorage of Nukuhiva every man would become a co-operating shareholder. That is to say, in addition to his wages, which would continue as heretofore, a scale of profits would be drawn up and equally divided amongst the crew at the termination of the voyage.

This was quite sufficient to induce the crew to enter into the compact with unheard-of enthusiasm. They were all convinced that never in the history of the whaling industry had such opportunities been given to men before the mast to accumulate a sum of money sufficient to retire on. It was very amusing to listen to the various ways in which their expected fortunes were to be spent.

As far as Joe Splendid was concerned, his share was already invested in his life's ambition. In his mind's

eye he was firmly established in a country pub, which he had duly named the "Dewdrop Inn"—or as Casey had it, the "Do Drop In." So earnest was Joe in his intention, so vivid had been his description of the hostel of his dreams, that several members of his watch, in whom he had confided, suggested that they would like to take an early opportunity to book rooms as Joe's first guests. This proposition Joe instantly declined, fearing that their drinking capabilities might be too great a strain upon the cellars of the "Dewdrop Inn." Although Joe had been promoted to the rank of third mate, he never once pretended to assume the manners of an officer.

Casey's ambition lay in another direction. He seemed to be more philanthropic. His idea was to purchase a small cottage near his home village, and there establish a school for Dublin city newsboys. It appears that Casey had commenced life as a newsboy in the Irish capital. He still retained a warm corner in his large heart for these small boys. He declared with pride that the city of Dublin possessed the finest body of policemen in the world, but it was the newsboys who kept the guardians of the peace so highly efficient.

Every man of the crew was a castle-builder, but like the mirages that appeared from time to time on the horizon, they were all more or less doomed to destruction before the winds of indecision. There is no person on earth as fickle-minded as a sailor. While at sea, resolution after resolution is made, schemes are drawn up for future adoption, only to be broken when once he sets foot on terra firma with his wages in his pocket. He becomes a millionaire for a moment and past schemes vanish.

I remember being shipmates with a North of England man who almost daily informed me that he would never more sign on a sailing-ship. Indeed, he had resolved not to go to sea again. At the termination of the voyage he was going to seek work ashore, if it were only road-sweeping. At the end of the voyage he was paid off with a good sum of money, and I cautioned him to go canny. A few weeks later I saw him leaving Millwall Docks, an able seaman in an Arctic whaler, bound for Baffin's Bay. His case was typical of hundreds. In those days the sea possessed thousands of such irresolute sons, who were easy victims to pimp and harpy (bad men and women who fattened on the finances of sailors in every port in the world). I'm afraid much of the money that was earned by the crew of the *Anna Lombard* went into the pockets of these human parasites.

Captain Lombard was now an invalid. He lay in a long deck-chair which had been converted into a comfortable and convenient bed by the newly appointed carpenter, and he was attended by Kong and his staff. The navigation of the ship devolved upon Mr. Haskell and me. Under the guidance of my old friend, I absorbed knowledge and gained experience which seldom falls to the lot of one so young, and it was with no small feeling of pride that I walked the poop deck, acting chief officer of the famous old whaler.

An almost uncanny silence prevailed on the ship as we slowly progressed northward over the pleasant sunlit sea. The heat was tempered by a steady breeze of about four knots, falling at night almost to a calm, to be revived again at sunrise. The music of our band

was never heard. Having lost their leader no attempt was made to revive or reorganise the orchestra.

One morning at daybreak whales were reported, and before noon two seventy-foot monsters fell victims to our harpoons. All through the day and far into the night the work of trying out went on, every member of the crew working at highest pressure, stripped to the waist, and streaming with perspiration and whale oil, but determined to carry on until finished.

A few days later we crossed the equator in a steady downpour of rain accompanied by a westerly wind. Every stitch of canvas was set and we raced along, while hundreds of gallons of rain water were stored in the fresh-water tanks. Every man's stock of clothing and bedding was brought out, and such a sudding and sousing I had not seen for many a long day. Washed clothes were everywhere. All hands went about in a state of partial nudity, for the temperature was high, and it was like living in a tepid shower-bath. Small chance the clothes had of drying, and for days the deck and rigging were littered with someone's laundry. Then the wind became choppy and finally dropped altogether. The heavens opened and down fell the rain in torrents like a cloudburst. For three days and nights the deluge lasted, and the men crept about like lost souls seeking the shelter that was nowhere to be found, veritable awe-inspired ghosts. The cooks and stewards seemed to be seized with a strange fear which all the persuasion and bullying of Kong could not allay. They could not keep a fire in the galley, while the crew were loud in their demands for hot coffee. Steve Finlay partly solved the problem by throwing out of the cookhouse into the rain-filled scuppers, a couple of shiv-

ering nervous Chinamen. Hitherto these cooks had served us faithfully, but now fear and panic seized them and they were helpless. Floundering through the teeming rain like drowned rats, they sought their berths, cursing the white man furiously in their Oriental jargon. We saw no more of them until the storm was over, when they apologised and returned to duty.

Kong worked like a slave, nursing his stricken friend and trying to maintain supplies, but a glass of grog and a few biscuits with tinned food, formed the staple portion of our meals during that trying period, and with that we were forced to be content.

The waning moon caused the nights to be very dark, and in the downpour it was necessary to keep a sharp look-out. Although we were out of the usual track of shipping, every precaution against collision had to be taken. Sometimes the wind came from the north-west in gusts, then from the south, only to die away a few moments later, leaving us stranded on the opposite tack with all hands cursing as only deep-water men can. We seemed to lie in an ocean of weird lights, for the falling rain made the phosphorescence to sparkle, while on each yard-arm and masthead truck were tiny fire balls which hovered on the spar ends like jack-o'-lanterns.

There was no swell to speak of, just a gentle heave, that perpetual motion which no rain can subdue. During the middle watch on the third night of the storm, I stood on the poop deck clad in long oilskin and sou'-wester, with the rain pelting around me, striving to penetrate the blackness, when the heavens were torn asunder by a terrific flash of lightning which nearly blinded me, and I stood for a moment rooted to the



deck—petrified, as it were. The flash seemed to linger in the sky, wriggling and darting hither and thither, from the horizon to the zenith, on the starboard bow, in long sinuous streaks falling into the sea with a crash of thunder. Not a breath of wind stirred, but I called the watch to the braces. The tiny lamp in the binnacle faintly revealed the moving compass card, which told me that the ship was out of control. We were simply turning round and round; there was no steerage way. I tried to gaze aloft, but the blackness shut everything out. I then walked aft and was thankful to see the mate standing by the helmsman. Peeping through the chart-house window, I saw that the barometer was still falling.

“Call all hands,” said the mate calmly. “Clew up the royals and light staysails.”

In daylight during a heavy rain storm this is no mean undertaking, but at night such a task seemed wellnigh impossible.

Let me pause here, gentle reader, to explain that on such nights as these the sailing-ship sailor is forced to use that God-given instinct, his sense of contact. Every portion of the ship is familiar to his touch; his fingers are as sensitive as those of a blind person. Downhauls, clew-lines, bunt-lines, spilling-lines and hal-yards are each so well known to him, that without a moment's hesitation he can find any required rope, no matter how dark the night. I well remember as an apprentice that one of our favourite dog-watch games was a contest in rope finding while blindfolded. It proved splendid training for the sense of touch.

As I have said, on dark nights the sense of touch is very much alive in the deep-water sailor as he mounts

the rigging, his bare feet and fingers telling him as he rises rattling by rattling (or, as shore folk say, step by step) where he is. He knows exactly where to place his feet and without hesitation will clamber to the top or crosstrees. Here he pauses just a second. Clad in oilskin coat and trousers, he is almost overwhelmed with perspiration. His oilskins are saturated, and hang from him damp and clammy. He dare not look up or the rain would pour down his back. His coat sleeves are tied at the wrist with rope yarn, but water runs up his arms, soaking him through, and when he mounts to the royal yard he is panting for breath, and yet here his work only begins.

The sail is heavy, stiff and solid. He grabs the leach and lays it on the yard. He cannot see, but his fingers tell what his eyes cannot. He knows that beneath him waits a terrible death should he fall. But, strange to say, he does not think of this, but works rapidly, his naked feet and toes hanging on to the foot-ropes confidently. At last the outer gasket is fast, then he climbs to the other side, and, after a struggle, gets the bunt of the sail ready for hoisting on to the yard. This is a long and tedious job, as the folds of the sail hold many gallons of water. With one leg round the mast and yard parrel for safety, he makes a gigantic tug, and up comes the sail, sending the water down on to the top-gallant yard. He pauses for a moment to listen for curses from his mates on the yard below. The top-gallant sail is more than a single-handed job, and when no response is made to the deluge, he does the cursing himself, for he knows that he must remain aloft and assist with that sail.

Although the task is a strenuous one, the gasket must

be passed in such a way that if a heavy squall of wind strikes the ship, not one tiny corner of the sail must be left unprotected, as it might be ripped out of the gaskets and bolt-ropes, and the sail blown away in a twinkling. All this has to be accomplished in the darkness.

"Upper topsails and courses. Look alive, men!" called Mr. Haskell.

The work was now fast and furious. Fortunately, each man knew perfectly well what was required of him, and about an hour before dawn the ship was snugly reduced to three lower topsails, waiting for whatever the gods might have in store for us.

Not for a moment did the rain cease, but the darkness suddenly lifted, and I think all hands heaved a sigh of relief. Then out of the north came the wind. We could see it coming before it struck us, and as the ship was riding somewhat light, showing a rather exposed topside, Mr. Haskell decided to run for it. So as the white ruffled water appeared, we squared the yards to meet it. With the rain swirling about her the old craft rose, then bounded forward, throwing aside the rain-beaten sea in snow-white billows from her bows—joyful to be off at last. But we were doubling on our course for the moment. However, the wind gradually crept round to the eastward, and soon we were making west with a small portion of northin'.

At 8 A.M. it was blowing a perfect hurricane, and a big sea running after us. Under the lee of the chart-house, I gazed astern into the teeth of the storm, and was charmed with the grandeur of the sight. Out of the leaden sky seemed to advance a host of white, curling, foam-crested waves, tumbling and roaring in their efforts to overwhelm us.

A large flock of sea-birds who had tasted the spoils of our recent "try outs" were enjoying the fun. Gannets and boobies swept round and round the ship in company with the common gull, and the tiny stormy petrel—Mother Carey's chickens.

"Sail O!" yelled the man in the crow's-nest, which look-out station was now a very important post of observation.

"Sail on the port bow!" We could scarcely hear him for the roaring of the wind.

Sure enough, out of the gloom, not a mile away was a large, four-masted, square-rigged ship, under main lower topsail, lying to, and shipping green seas with each roll. She made a wonderful picture, floundering amidst a maelstrom of white water. She literally wallowed, and as she lifted her head the water rolled from her deck like a waterfall. Ark Royd, standing beside me, said:

"Bet yer ten bob the folk in yon ship think we are the Flying Dutchman!"

"I shouldn't wonder," I said with a thrill of resentment at the very mention of the name. We were certainly flying through the storm at a terrific pace, and the stranger soon vanished, being hidden in the mists astern. Ten minutes by the charthouse clock was the duration of her visibility.

At ten o'clock we were steering W.N.W. when the mizzen lower topsail was blown from the bolt-ropes, and every moment we expected to see the fore and main go the same way. But they hung on. There was no indication of the rain ceasing. At 10.30 the glass rose one-tenth; at noon there was no improve-

ment, but the wind veered to the south another point and we increased our northin'.

Mr. Haskell began to show signs of great fatigue, and I feared he was on the verge of collapse. I gazed at his handsome face as it appeared through the hood of his oilskin, and thought what wonderful vitality was his. With one hand on the mizzen royal backstay, and the other clinging to the taff-rail, sheltered from the storm by a canvas cloth suspended from the rigging and a cabin ventilator, he reminded me of some Viking chieftain. Knowing a little of his life's history as I did, it was easy for me to imagine him surrounded with the splendours of Court life, but somehow, on this occasion, he did seem to resemble some hardy Norseman, weather-beaten and buffeted by the storm.

"Won't you go below, sir?" I said anxiously, stepping to his shelter. He glanced astern, then his eyes wandered to the fore and main lower topsails as he replied:

"No, sir, not yet."

It was my dismissal, so I returned to the lee of the charthouse, but my heart froze as I thought of the possible collapse of Peter. With the Captain sick, the safety of the ship would fall upon me, and I did not relish the idea of such a responsibility.

Joe and Ark were left in charge of the deck at lunch-time. I managed to coax the mate below. For the first time in forty-eight hours he took some food and decided to rest, on condition that I called him if the glass rose or fell one-tenth. This I promised, and he retired.

During the afternoon Kong informed me that Captain Lombard wished to see me, so telling Joe to watch

the glass I went below. Throwing off my wet oilskins in the chartroom, I made my way to the Captain's stateroom. He lay in his bunk evidently suffering great pain, for his features were drawn and haggard, one side of his mouth and face being distorted and disfigured, while he had also lost the use of his right leg.

"You sent for me, sir?" I said, saluting.

"Yes, Mr. Hedger," he returned, with difficulty. Then he questioned me about the storm and the appearance of the weather to windward. I told him all there was to report, and from time to time his eyes wandered to the compass above his bunk, which showed him that we were racing before the storm to the north and west.

I really think he called me below to see if I was in any way nervous at being left in charge of the deck in such a storm, so I braced myself to reassure him, and after eyeing me suspiciously, he said, "Let Mr. Haskell sleep. Should the topsails blow away, do not disturb him, let them blow away. It would ease the ship."

"Shall I cut them adrift, sir?"

He glanced at me for a moment or two, then turning painfully, said:

"Yes, sir, and should the sea rise, hang a couple of oil bags in the fore chains."

"Aye, aye, sir," I returned, and as I left the cabin he said:

"Let her drive, sir, let her drive. It is best. I once drove through a typhoon in the China seas in this old ship. So let her go, Mr. Hedger, let her drive."

The Captain's enthusiasm got hold of me as I reached

the charthouse. Disregarding my oilskin I stood beside Joe Splendid. He shouted in my ear:

"I wish the fore-topsail would blow away. She'll strain herself all to pieces. Damn this cyclone, Harry."

"No, we won't," I said loudly, with a laugh. "We'll cut away that fore-topsail, and look, Joe, take Casey and hang some oil bags over the fore chains."

I saw a serious look come into his face as I shouted these orders to him. Then I ran to the lee of the charthouse, where stood Ark Royd, telling him to keep an eye on the glass and watch the steering, while I dashed along the bridge. The wind very soon blew my shirt off and the pelting rain stung my naked flesh.

The ship gave a tremendous lurch to port. The main yard-arm dipped into the foam-crested waves, and I paused to catch my breath for the starboard roll. Over she went. I could see Ark and two helmsmen struggling with the wheel. As she rolled amidships, or to an even keel, I jumped for the fore-rigging and cautiously climbed step by step. Sometimes I feared to let go my grip to climb higher, and when I got to the futtock shrouds I wished there was a lubber's-hole through which I might squeeze my body. But I must climb over the top of the platform, as the lower cross-trees were boarded quite close to the lower shroud-heads. As I clutched the futtock shrouds, my legs were blown from under me, and with the starboard roll I felt myself swinging out at almost right angles. What was left of my shirt was torn away to leeward. Exerting every bit of strength, and retaining my presence of mind, I managed to save myself from dropping into the sea. When she rolled to an even keel, I had just sufficient strength to very gradually pull myself

over the projecting platform by seizing the topmast sheer-pole.

That was the closest call I ever had, a call fully understood by old timers. When I found myself standing on the narrow platform, I breathed deeply for a moment to recover my wind, and when I reached the bunt of the lower topsail yard, I drew my jack-knife and cut away the lashings from the jack-stays. Then hell broke loose.

Directly the strain was gone from the bunt, the sail split down the centre, with a terrific noise, nearly throwing me off the yard. In less than ten seconds there was nothing left but the bolt-ropes. I watched the great lengths of heavy canvas fly ahead of the ship. They danced away like sheets of paper caught up and waved about by the tearing wind, and as they went skimming away over the foam, I felt suddenly excited, for the spirit of the storm seemed to get into my bones, and I laughed hysterically. A moment before I had cheated death. For a few minutes I could scarcely move, but trembled with excitement. The rain beating on my naked body caused it to tingle with pain. The loss of the topsail steadied the ship and I reached the deck with comparative ease. By this time the oil bags had been lashed to the chains and the dripping oil spread out all round the ship. There was scarcely any broken water near her.

I worked my way aft, trying to hide my nakedness, for my trousers were in ribbons, having been blown away, and when I reached the poop deck Mr. Haskell confronted me with a smiling "well done!" Then I returned to my cabin for a fresh outfit. Kong produced a stiff bumper of grog, and I was soon on the



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poop again, for a great explosion aloft set me wondering what other misfortune had befallen us. It was the main lower topsail no longer able to stand the pressure of the wind. It had been ripped out of the bolt-ropes like a sheet of newspaper.

For about three hours we raced along, the rain gradually easing off, which caused the sea to rise to tremendous heights. On our starboard beam the water-laden clouds lowered into the sea, and as I watched the fantastic formation I saw the greatest waterspout of my seafaring experience. For fully an hour it kept pace with the ship, gathering volume as it went. Then a blinding flash of lightning accompanied by a crash of thunder ended its career. It fell with a mighty crash, sending towards us great waves in which our old craft rolled, yard-arms under.

That was the grand finale. The storm was over. It very gradually blew itself out and the clouds burst to the westward pierced by the fast-declining sun, whose rays made a wonderful picture amidst the receding storm clouds. By midnight we lay becalmed under a cloudless sky where myriad stars shone in all their tropical glory, reflected in the heaving ocean as in a huge restless mirror.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### DEATH

I AM not going to record in detail all that happened during the run from the Marquesas to the Sandwich Islands, but will select from my log-book the chief items of interest.

Fourteen whales were put through our "try works," giving us a fair quantity of whale oil, but not sufficient to satisfy Captain Lombard, who was determined to refit at Honolulu for the return journey to England *via* Cape Horn, a programme which met with the approval of all hands. It would be a long and tedious journey over thousands of miles of ocean, but what matter when one was gathering wealth and experience under such congenial conditions as prevailed in the *Anna Lombard*. Every man looked forward with delight at the prospect of reaching London a full ship.

Kong expressed the opinion that the long voyage would enable the Captain to recover from the effects of his last stroke. Mr. Haskell told me he would try to persuade the Captain to go to a private hospital in Honolulu—if that town boasted of such an institution—to recuperate. I had my doubts about his willingness to leave the ship until he reached the London River, for, next to his wife and daughters, he loved the ship with all the power of his sailor's soul. Then there was the promised return call at the Argentine capital.

Whether the departure of the scientific staff would make any difference to these arrangements, I did not know, but I did look forward with pleasure to once more meeting Mrs. Lombard, although I knew that the loss of her son-in-law would mar the happiness of the reunion, especially for her daughter, Mrs. Richester.

I will pass on and briefly record a strange and tragic experience which befell us when fifteen degrees north of the equator. (This experience I humbly submit to the naturalists and biologists of the great universities for future investigation.)

Calms and variables pursued us after the great cyclone recorded in the last chapter, but we scarcely noticed the length of their duration owing to the number of whales caught during this period. But there came a time when no whales appeared, and the inactivity and almost unbearable heat commenced to tell on the men. Two in the forecabin were stricken with a strange and mysterious complaint. It was not scurvy, neither was it plague or fever. The sick men complained of loss of energy and vitality, and lost the use of their lower limbs. Their mates carried them to the deckhouse, to that room which formerly housed the refining plant, and now converted into a hospital. No one seemed to know definitely the nature of the complaint, and when two others were reported stricken in the same way the crew became somewhat alarmed, and very morbid. Men whom I thought devoid of superstition crept about the decks in silence and fear. Even Casey was unable to raise a joke from his wonderful store of mirth. He went about his duty with a woe-begone look and was seen to cross himself as though

invoking his patron saint to preserve him from the strange visitation. Day after day the calm prevailed, the sea reflecting the brilliant sky, from which the heat rose as from a sea of molten steel. There appeared to be something very fascinating over the side. Whenever opportunity offered, the men leaned over the rail, staring into the depths until their minds seemed to be filled with horror, and one by one they would turn away and quietly vanish forward as though afraid of what they saw. No one cared to speak and an uncanny silence took possession of all. The superstition that a human life was required by the gods controlling the elements became manifest amongst the forward hands. Ark Royd, with all the credulity of his Polynesian ancestors, told me with bated breath that a death was about to take place, then the weather would change. I smiled at him, but at the same time must confess that I too seemed influenced by some unaccountable demoniacal force, which, in spite of my unbelief in such things, caused me to think that there may be something in their vague superstitions after all. The morbid demeanour of the crew was unusual, for our crowd of seamen were at times unduly lively and full of good-natured banter, a sure sign of contentment in a ship's crew. Then Mr. Jones reported sick, and when I visited him he was like one possessed by ten thousand devils. He lay in his bunk muttering all kinds of nonsense, but what struck me as being most peculiar was the way in which he trembled and shook as with an ague. His eyes protruded from his head, and the saliva from his mouth was like sea foam. How to treat him no one knew. Even Kong with his wonderful knowledge of medicine did not know what to do for him. He ad-

ministered a drug which seemed to soothe the nerves of the sick man, for soon he was sleeping soundly.

I must say that Kong and his staff were untiring in their efforts to assist the sick ones, and that the whole ship's company did not go down with the terrible malady was due entirely to those devoted Orientals.

It was the twenty-sixth day of the calm. For just twenty-six days in succession the sun had sunk behind the horizon like a ball of fire in a cloudless sky, and just as many times had it risen again like a globe of molten gold with not a cloud to herald its coming. During a part of that period the light of the moon was as tormenting by night as the sun by day. Some of us were rendered half blind by the penetrating silver moonbeams, which shone on the stinking oily waters, rebounding with a horrible glare that was particularly fierce at full moon.

That night will ever be remembered by me. I shall carry its horrors in my mind for all time. Just as two bells struck, one hour after midnight, Captain Lombard passed away. I was walking the poop deck, hatless and shoeless, whistling softly for a breeze. The heat was intense, so intense that the pitch in the deck-seams made walking most uncomfortable in spite of the fact that water had been thrown about to prevent the decks from cracking. The stars shone like huge crystals on a mantle of velvet, being reflected in the sea. The stench from the stagnant water was appalling. Indeed, so terrible had it been for the past few days that no one was inclined to take his food. The very thought of food seemed repulsive. There was no swell to speak of. We seemed to have reached a part of the North Pacific which was entirely devoid of motion. As I

watched the upper limb of the moon rise out of the sea to enter upon its last quarter, there soon became manifest a dazzling iridescence that concealed the horizon with an impenetrable mist, and as I meditated upon the everlasting monotony, wondering when it would all end, I distinctly heard a cry. It seemed to come from somewhere on the port quarter, as though from some poor soul in distress, or was it just my imagination? There was no one at the wheel, for Mr. Haskell had dismissed the helmsman. He would not compel a man to stand his stick for two solid hours at a lashed wheel. It was simply a waste of time and energy to try to steer the ship. Thus I was alone.

The cry caused me to pause in my walk and gaze seaward. It could not have been the cry of a bird, we were too far from land. Had some unknown monster risen to the surface to issue a cry of warning to the lost souls in the *Anna Lombard*? Perhaps it was some creature come from the depths to devour the life forms germinated from the stinking decomposed mollusca in which we floundered. Something prompted me to turn round, and I saw Kong, who had noiselessly approached. He said solemnly:

"Captain Lombard has passed away."

Then I collapsed, and the next thing I remembered was lying on the charthouse couch with Kong and Peter Haskell bending over me, trying to force some brandy down my throat. I thought that I too had been stricken with the strange malady, but when I gulped down the strong liquor, my nerves steadied, and I returned to the poop, apologising for my weakness. Peter followed, telling me of the Captain's death, the shock of which had caused me to swoon. I think that was

the only time in my life when my senses had completely left me, but my nervous system had been gradually working to a climax for a long time, and when I saw the ghostly form of Kong, standing so close to me, telling me that the greatest sea-captain of my acquaintance was dead—I had long entertained hopes of his recovery—something in my brain must have snapped. But I determined not to give way again, for Mr. Haskell's sake.

As if to confirm the superstitions of the men who firmly believed that the sacrifice of a human life is necessary to break long periods of calm, a light breeze came dancing across the glassy waters with the coming of the dawn, ruffling the surface with a slight cat's-paw, and inspiring us with hope. We dropped the sheets and tacks of the courses, and braced the yards to meet it. In short time the nauseating aroma which had come both day and night from the ocean completely vanished.

Those members of the crew who were able, stood with open mouths to inhale the sweet refreshing breeze. Had it not been for the death of the Captain, much cheering would have been heard. As it was, all were much affected by the coming of the wind, which meant new life and health. Even those prostrate ones stirred joyously in their hammocks with a new-born hope of recovery, and who can wonder at their manifestations of joy at the coming of the life-giving breeze, for we had passed through a period of stagnation which threatened to sap the vitality of us all.

No doubt the reader will wonder why we did not use the pinnacle to tow the ship out of the calm zone. The machinery of that craft had broken down and all

## DEATH

the ingenuity of Steve Finlay could not readjust it. Thus we were at the mercy of the elements.

As the wind freshened, so did the stricken seamen recover their lost vitality. It was a strange phenomenon, one as yet unexplained by science, and I have many times thought that there must surely be some natural reason for this atmospheric inertia. Peter Haskell's explanation is the only one I have heard, and until some scientific "busybody" gets to work and discovers another and more tangible one, I am quite content with my old friend's opinion—but more of this anon.

Just as the sun vanished over the western horizon, we committed the body of Captain Lombard to its last resting-place. The ceremony made a great impression on all hands. But I will pass over that sad event. As we placed the ship once more upon her course for the Sandwich Islands, the words of an old sea song ran through my mind:

*A splash and a plunge, and our task was o'er,  
The billows rolled as they rolled before,  
And many an eye grew dim with tears  
As we lowered him into a sailor's grave.*

The men crept about the decks like shadows, and an uncanny silence prevailed. Goodness only knows what might have happened had not the wind freshened as it did, into a steady eight-knot breeze. Every man was more or less depressed by the death of the skipper. Peter Haskell seemed to be the only member of the whole company able to maintain his usual spirits, although the loss of his friend meant much to him.

Of course, he assumed the post of Captain, and I was



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duly appointed chief mate. The tragic event, with its subsequent promotions, was duly entered in the log-book.

At noon, all hands mustered aft, and Captain Haskell informed the crew that owing to the death of the Captain the business of whaling would be discontinued, and that we would make all speed to Honolulu, our subsequent movements being governed by what transpired at that port.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE LAY OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

THREE days after this sad event we sighted the Sandwich Islands. Steaming north-west to the island of Oahu, at dawn on the following morning we entered the fine harbour of Honolulu.

From our anchorage—just inside the harbour—the town looked a straggling place amidst the fern-clad hills. It was the strange formation of the volcanic peaks rising behind the town that fascinated me most, and I wondered if I should get an opportunity to visit the distant volcano which is called Habemaumau—or the House of Everlasting Fire. As there are many wonderful sights to be seen in this place, a few days on shore would be very acceptable.

We were soon surrounded by a number of boats containing vendors of fruit and Hawaiian curios, and the crew of the *Anna Lombard* were ready customers.

Captain Haskell went on shore in the Customs boat, and during his absence the sailmaker came aft, looking but the shadow of his former self, and said: "Mr. Hedger, I am going to ask the Captain to pay me off in this port."

I looked at his emaciated and drawn features, and realised that if he was not soon placed on shore another death might take place on the *Anna Lombard*.

Since he had first taken to his bunk with his strange

illness, I had visited him from time to time, sympathising with him, and pointing out that his study of occult forces should have given him a clear understanding of the laws governing the strange occurrences of a few days ago. Whereas it had inspired him with superstitious fear which, if given way to, might eventually affect his whole nervous system.

He sat on the cabin skylight and gazed at the native boats passing the ship.

"I don't think that anyone will be paid off in this port," I said. "As far as I can gather, we have only entered this place to pick up despatches and communicate by cable with the ship's headquarters. So, if I were you, Mr. Jones, I would settle myself down for a few months longer on the *Anna Lombard*."

Evidently he was disappointed, for he walked forward and returned to his berth in a sulky, silent mood, and I saw him no more until the Captain's return.

The evening was well advanced when Peter Haskell returned. I heard a commotion on the main deck. The sailmaker seemed suddenly to have gone mad. He sprang at the old gentleman as he came over the gangway, shouting that he wanted to go ashore at once, as the *Anna Lombard* was a doomed ship. He seemed panic-stricken, and influenced by some new-born fear. When I ran forward to my chief's assistance, I was rather surprised at the manner in which Peter Haskell met his onslaught.

He stood before the infuriated, agitated man, and gazed into his eyes very calmly, and his face lit up with a smile of sympathy, which seemed to quiet the evident rage that controlled the sailmaker. Kong, standing behind me, said, *sotto voce*:

"The spirit of goodness protects our friend at all times. There is no reason to be alarmed." A fact which was clearly manifest.

All hands had gathered aft on the quarterdeck, and it was very apparent that the sailmaker possessed many friends and sympathisers amongst the crew. I knew that he had spread the gospel of revolution and mutiny, inspiring their imagination and superstition by foretelling some terrible evil, using, to support his argument, his supposed vision of Van der Decken's old Dutch galleon. The men had come to support Jones' demands, for about this time the Sandwich Islands were an ideal paradise for the beachcomber, and men with a good-sized pay-roll were exceedingly welcome additions to the population—until their pockets were empty.

Peter gently placed his hand upon the sailmaker's shoulder and forced him to a seat on the after hatchway. Then he said kindly:

"Now, Mr. Jones, please calm yourself and tell me what you require."

Jones for a while seemed at a loss for words. Under the calm influence of the skipper, he ceased to tremble, and glanced at the assembled seamen as if looking for prompting in some prearranged scheme. One man stepped forward and said: "We want to go ashore, sir. . . ."

"Yes," interrupted Jones, springing to his feet. "Yes, that's it. We want to pay off."

The Captain turned to the men, still retaining his hand upon Jones' shoulder, and said:

"It is impossible to pay off any man in this port. The authorities object to the presence of strangers in

the town. The banks will not advance money until a stable government is constructed, so I have despatched letters of credit to San Francisco, making all arrangements to pay off at that port."

He glanced at the sailmaker sympathetically as he continued:

"I am sorry, Mr. Jones. You see how impossible it is."

But Jones was now almost overwhelmed with some emotion which looked very much like disappointment. I think he had set his mind upon going on shore at this place, but could only murmur under his breath:

"I am too ill, sir, to continue the voyage. I need medical attention."

"Come, Jones," answered the Captain, "let me assist you to your room. You shall have the very best of medical attention."

The sailmaker, seeing himself gradually losing the support of the crew (for they had returned to the fore-castle one by one), allowed himself to be led forward, Kong following.

A well-filled mail-bag was handed up from a shore launch, and while I sorted the letters my soul was filled with admiration for the Captain. A state of affairs which appeared to be developing towards open rebellion was quietly subdued by the charming personality of Peter Haskell.

After dinner we sought the poop deck, where Peter told me his plans. At sunrise on the morrow we would commence the final stage of the voyage, and my eyes lingered on the outline of the distant hills regretfully. My hopes of a run on shore and a visit to the scenic wonders of these charming islands were thus doomed

to disappointment. During the journey to the Californian port, it would be my duty to take an inventory of every detail of the ship's gear and furnishings, down to the smallest length of rope yarn. At San Francisco the *Anna Lombard* would be sold, and the expedition dismissed. He then read to me a portion of a communication from the family of General S—— in Valparaiso, announcing the death of Madam S——. This sad event filled me with sorrow and regret, for much of the data, concerning our voyage, as described in these pages, were specially written for that lady's use for literary purposes.

The conversation then took a personal turn between Kong and the Captain, so I strolled forward to listen to some real Hawaiian music, lingering on the poop deck just long enough to realise that Valparaiso would be the final destination of Peter Haskell and Kong San, when their business in San Francisco was concluded.

Two large canoes filled with natives came alongside and moored to the starboard swinging boom; and here I must say a word about those people, for they struck me as being very handsome savages.

In the late eighties of the last century, the natives of these islands had not been discovered by the rich American tourist. They had not been hypnotised by the power of the tripper's gold. The many curious customs of these ancient people were not then capitalised, and, if I might use the term, theatricalised. So we saw them but little improved by the missionary in the ways of civilisation. 'Tis true that Christianity and commercialism had instructed them in many ways,

but they were not the spoilt children of the globe-trotting tourists of subsequent years.

The bewitching music was charming, their voices blending harmoniously as their string instruments rendered old Hawaiian melodies. We gave them money and old garments, and as they paddled shorewards in the darkness they sang a haunting lullaby which has dwelt in my memory ever since.

Next morning at daybreak we hove up anchor and commenced the final passage of the voyage, and I must say that although it was the most sorrowful stage of our journey, as far as the weather was concerned, it was a very pleasant sensation to sail day after day under sunlit skies across the track of the north-east trade winds to the American coast. We arrived there during the early part of March. During the twenty-eight days occupied by the journey from the Sandwich group, there were no signs of trouble amongst the forward hands. Nor had Mr. Jones attempted to fire their imaginations with stories of occult visions. He became silent and morose, very seldom exchanging two words with anyone. Searching through the final pages of my journal, I find that there is one conversation or discussion worth reproducing before I draw my story to a close.

One evening, just before we sighted the Californian coast and the famous heads—the Golden Gate of the West, the entrance to San Francisco harbour—my chief and myself were walking the deck as usual, when the Captain referred to the long period of calm weather which ended with the death of Captain Lombard. "That phenomenon has never been scientifically explained," said he, "for the simple reason that no sci-

entific expedition has ever encountered it. My explanation is, of course, not an expert one, but the opinion of a student of biology. It is this, Mr. Hedger: certain planets, when nearest to the earth, give out or radiate rays of energy, which operate on or affect this planet at the weakest places of its atmospheric belt. These rays are invisible to the naked eye, but as new or unknown elements they enter the sphere of our atmosphere, and act upon the human more or less seriously.

"It is a most remarkable thing," he continued, "that only a few years ago a large square-rigged ship was found, with all sail standing and at the mercy of the wind, without a guiding hand. Upon closer examination it was discovered that every man on board was dead, and that there was no sign of violence or sickness. Then, sir, how did they die? My theory may be correct, and after our experience I am more convinced than ever that what I say is tangible. Anyway, future generations will discover, no doubt, that what I say is correct. But it will not be in the generation of the steamship.

I could not follow Peter Haskell's theory, or his understanding of these things, but I nevertheless entered his statement in the log-book. It is a most astonishing fact that quite a number of his ideas have been borne out, and substantiate my subsequent study of Astrology and Nautical Astronomy. Then when I came to study Biology and the Evolution of Man, I saw that Prof. Haeckel, Dr. Darwin and others speak of a substance which they call Protoplasm, which is about the only word in the modern language that describes the material from which the creatures seen by



us are evolved. I was overjoyed and exceedingly interested, especially when I read the opening chapters of a series of essays on the Problems of Nature by Gustav Jaeger, D.M. From that famous book I will quote the words which set my imagination on fire, for I had been a privileged witness of these things. Says Dr. Jaeger:

"In order to explain the origin of animal life on our planet, we must bear in mind that there was a time when no organic life existed on the globe." (That long period of calm conveyed the idea to a T.) "Secondly, the first living things must have originated from materials which formed essential constituents in the composition of inorganic matter—" (Peter's theory of the planetary rays and the action of the full moon as these rays fell upon the earth; for he reminded me that at the period of full moon a famous planet of our solar system was in conjunction with the earth, and the decomposed nature of the sea was perfectly ripe for the production of inorganic matter.) Dr. Jaeger continues:

"Thirdly, we must inquire what were the general conditions on our planet at the time when the first organic beings made their appearance. It is plain that the surface temperature of the globe must have been reduced to such a low degree, that the water . . . being part of the atmosphere, must have cooled down and become liquid. In all likelihood an enormous ocean was formed, the temperature of which must have been less than 167° F., because this is the highest temperature at which animal life can exist. Thus it is probable that the first organic beings inhabited the water."

For fear that I should overlook some detail which

may interest the reader, let me repeat that it was the unusual duration of the calm, the cloudless sky and stagnant water that fascinated me. I had, on former voyages, experienced periods of calm weather in almost every sea, but never had I seen the water of the ocean in a state of decomposition. At first the stench that rose from the surface caused me to fear that the many barrels of oil in the ship's hold had rotted, but reason and common sense together with our past experience made us realise how impossible this was, and as time passed and hours extended to days, and days to weeks, life was formed on the surface of the sea.

All around the ship lay a swarm of ugly living creatures which grew in strength and number as the calm weather became prolonged. These creatures resembled nothing that I had previously seen, and Peter Haskell suggested that they represented the first forms of life that appeared on this planet, substantiating the theory of the evolution exponents.

So interested was I that I drew a bucket of water from overside, and poured it on to the after hatchway, that under the microscopic lens produced by Kong, who also was interested, I might examine the creatures with greater ease. Judge my astonishment when I discovered their invisibility. Let me explain that all the time these creatures were in their native element—the sea-water—one could see them wriggling and sprawling about devouring one another in one gluttonous gobble; but as soon as they were put on to a foreign substance they disappeared, although they could be discerned by the touch of the hands owing to the gelatinous nature of their construction. Viewed under a lens in a ship's

bucket, they seemed to possess, or reflect, every shade of colour ever imagined by man.

Peter Haskell, standing beside me, repeated part of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," which surely must apply to these things:

*Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire:  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire.*

*O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware.*

As the calm extended, so did these creatures, and the odour they exhaled increased. The morning before the Captain's death I conveyed one of these creatures to the deck, and realised that it was not only a very substantial thing, but also the queerest living thing that I had ever set eyes on, and then the thought ran through my mind: Was this thing the spawn of some ocean monster whose very existence depended upon those protracted calms? Was the oily decomposed mass which exhaled noxious gases, so overpowering and detrimental to human health, the very source of life from which these creatures came? Who can tell? Again quoting the words of my dear old sea-father, Peter Haskell—peace to his ashes wherever they are—"The great Creator moves in many mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."

## THE LAY OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The self-same Force which created millions of those deep-sea enigmas had carried into the Great Beyond the spirit of the whitest man, the greatest gentleman, who ever commanded a ship.

To the great scientists of our times, and other intellectual busy-bodies interested in these things, I say:

“Go down to the sea in a sailing-ship. Penetrate those calm-belts of the ocean. If you survive as we did, use your learning for the common good, that the remaining superstitions of the sea may be explained in the light of human reason.”



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE *Anna Lombard* was sold to a Puget Sound lumber firm. Soon after, the crew were dismissed and the cargo sold. On the morning that she was towed to sea in charge of a crew of runners, three sad souls stood on the end of the jetty, with tears in their eyes, to bid her a fond farewell.

As she vanished from our view, swallowed up in the smoke of her tug and the harbour mists, Peter Haskell said:

"Come, gentlemen, let us dine. The transcontinental train will wait for no man."

I dined with my chief and Kong for the last time, in an up-town hotel, and that same evening I was flying across country, for the voyage of the *Anna Lombard* had passed into history.

It was during the journey from Liverpool to London that I heard again of the old ship. My eye fell upon a press item which caused me much sorrow. The fine old ship had been piled up on Cape Flattery during a blizzard, and was a total wreck. There was nothing said about loss of life, for that is not of so much importance to the commercial world as the magnitude of the *Anna Lombard's* insurance.

If this should catch the eye of any of her former crew—my old shipmates—in greeting them I would

## DEEP-SEA BUBBLES

like to remind them that the sailmaker was quite correct when he said that the *Anna Lombard* was a doomed ship. For no power on earth could save her bones from the jagged rocks and the angry surf at the base of Cape Flattery.

H. H. B.

*Auckland, New Zealand.*

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